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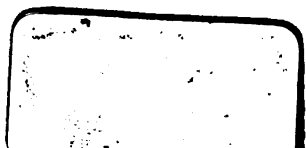
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MISS MARSTON'S
GIRLS
AND THEIR
CONFIRMATION

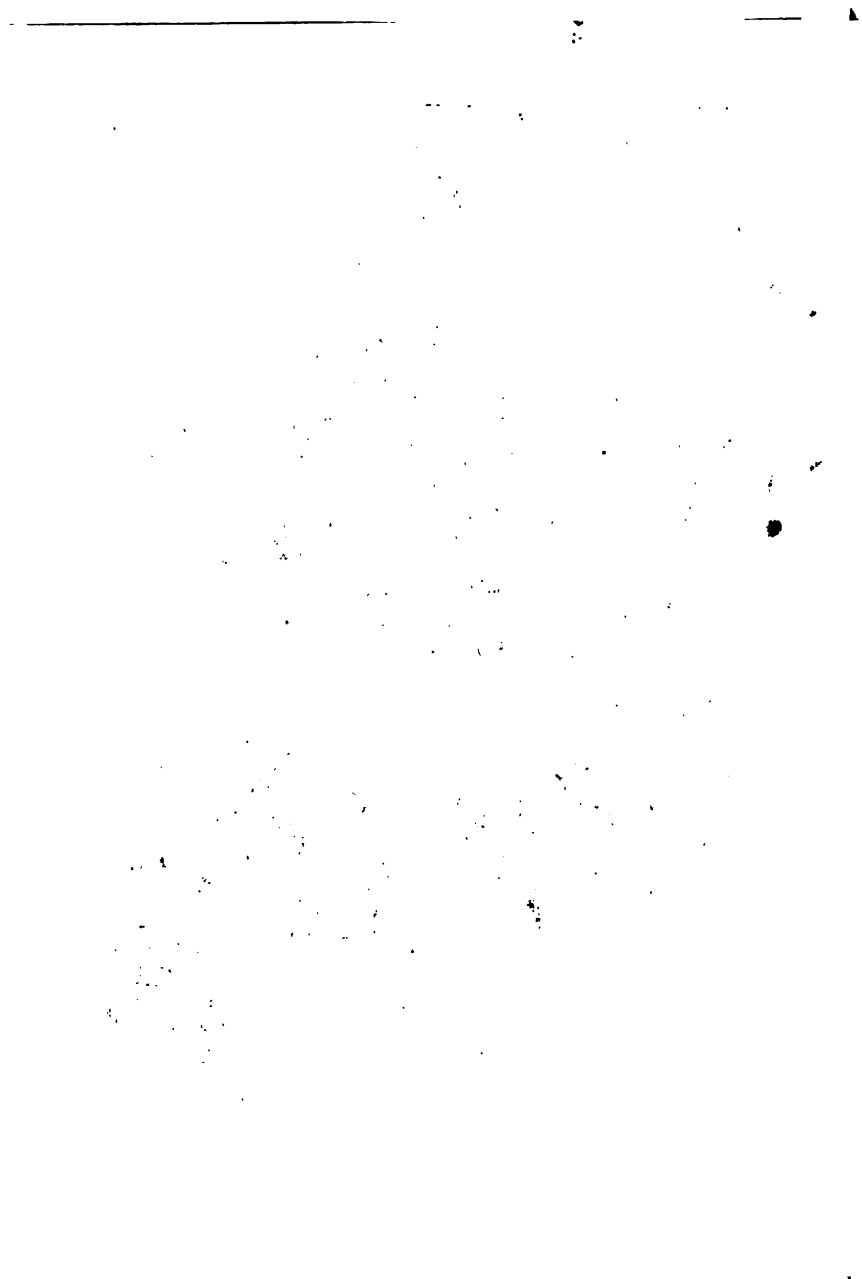






MISS MARSTON'S GIRLS.

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MISS MARSTON'S GIRLS

AND

THEIR CONFIRMATION.

"There is nothing on earth so lowly, but duty giveth it importance."

—*Martin F. Tupper.*

"Since service is the highest lot,
And angels know no higher bliss,
Then with what good her cup is fraught
Who was created but for this!"

—*Mrs. Charles.*

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MISS MARSTON'S GIRLS.

IN the spring of the year confirmations were held in Carrington, Kirchester, and the neighbourhood. There were generally some candidates from Miss Marston's Bible-class. At the time of which I am about to speak, four young women who attended it were confirmed.

One of them,

ROSE COLLINS,

was a worldly girl. Her parents had prospered in business. Their chief aim was to make money, in order to keep up a respectable appearance, and to be able to enjoy themselves.

Their eldest daughter was rather handsome. Her parents were proud of her, and wished to set her off to the best advantage; and of course Rose was not ignorant of her good looks.

Her mother had found her a situation as young-

lady's-maid at Westmeade Hall, where she had high wages. The family was irreligious, and the servants were giddy and thoughtless.

It is not often that young women in these circumstances will join a Bible-class; but Rose's parents had allowed her when a child to go to the village Sunday-school, and some early impressions and recollections of a kind teacher and interesting Bible lessons still remained, so that when pressed by a friend, who brought an invitation from Miss Marston for Rose to come to the class at Carrington, she consented to do so, under the idea that it would only be supposed by her fellow-servants that she was going for a walk.

It would be a change any way. She could just try what the class was like. There was one consolation, she need not go again if it did not suit her.

So Rose went to the Bible-class the next Sunday afternoon, and continued to attend it for some weeks.

She did indeed think Miss Marston rather over-religious, and the girls too quiet for her fancy; still she felt interested, and enjoyed the singing.

In coming away from the class she was often inclined to make fun of any little eccentricities which her quick eye observed.

It was Miss Marston's wish that the girls should return home quietly, and they were generally pretty

good in this respect, yet now and then there would be some in such high spirits that one like Rose would set them laughing, and make them so giddy as to destroy the good effect the Scripture lesson might have had upon them. There were those who would endeavour to put a stop to this, for they were grieved to see that the fowls of the air were carrying off the good seed (see St. Matt. xiii. 4, 19); but sometimes it only seemed to make matters worse, as the girls were jealous of any interference.

Rose had only joined the class a few weeks when notice of the approaching confirmation was given out in the churches.

The Westmeade Hall servants did not so often avail themselves of their opportunities of attending the house of God as they might have done. Their master and mistress, not caring for religion, readily listened to excuses on this point, and only required that some of the principal servants should attend the morning service, to maintain a creditable appearance.

Rose had been more regular in her attendance at church since she went to the Bible-class, and had heard the notice of the confirmation given out. She learnt that her friend Eliza Thompson, also other girls with whom she was acquainted, were going to be confirmed, so Rose thought it would be a good opportunity for herself. Her parents con-



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to a fancied righteousness of her own. The lady spoke of the necessity of being born again; of turning our back on our sins, and turning to the Saviour; but poor Eliza thought she did forsake sin and follow Christ.

Miss Marston spoke of the guilt of sin, and of the awful greatness of the sacrifice required to blot it out—a sacrifice no less than the death and bloodshedding of Jesus, the Son of God. She besought Eliza to pray for the Holy Spirit to show her her need of Christ, and to lead her as a lost sinner to the Saviour.

“Many who mean well are deceived about themselves,” said the lady, “and are therefore in the greatest danger.” She advised both Eliza and Rose to delay being confirmed if they felt that they could not give their hearts to Christ, and look for salvation to Him alone. But though they were struck with her earnest words and prayers, whatever impression was made soon passed away.

ELLEN HUNTER

lived at home till she was seventeen. Her mother had a large family, and was always delicate and ailing. Ellen, the eldest daughter, was the greatest comfort of her mother's life—kind and thoughtful,

and the friend and almost mother of the younger brothers and sisters.

Naturally quiet and amiable, the cares and sorrows of home had made her gentle and considerate beyond her years. It seemed to come more naturally to her than to many, to think for others before herself. She was seldom impatient with the little ones, though, like most children, they were sometimes peevish or wilful ; and when Ellen was weary or cast down, their noisy mirth was almost more than she could bear. At other times their buoyant spirits cheered and enlivened the sadness and sameness of the young girl's daily life.

Ellen's father was not a kind husband. Being a selfish man, he grew tired of seeing his wife a constant invalid ; and this was part of the trouble which had to be borne uncomplainingly.

Hunter decided that, at seventeen, Ellen ought to be earning money for herself, as her sister next to her and the two younger brothers did. He had a lively, good-natured sister, who was wanting a home at this time, and she would be glad to come and attend to his wife and children and the household matters. So, though it would be a sore trial to part with the daughter who had been her mother's right hand in everything, Mrs. Hunter could not but consent, as she felt it would be to Ellen's advantage to go to service. Before long a promising situation

was found, where she would be taught housemaid's work. It was soon settled for her to go.

The dreaded morning came only too quickly when the carrier's cart was to convey her to Carrington. It was a sad parting with all, especially between Ellen and her mother. The boys ran across the field to where the cart had to pass, to toss up their caps and shout "hurrah!" as their final farewell. Ellen answered them by waving her pocket handkerchief and smiling through her tears, which for a few minutes were uncontrollable, and only increased by her fellow-travellers' kind attempts to comfort her.

Ellen bravely determined to leave off crying. She tried to cheer herself with the thought that she should surely have a day given her to come home before very long, and might earn enough money by that time to buy some comforts for her mother.

Ellen was kindly received by her mistress and fellow-servant, who made allowance for any little mistakes the inexperienced girl might make, seeing that she wished to do right, and was very willing.

She was always the one to think for others, and to help in a difficulty, or anticipate her mistress's wants, especially when she saw Mrs. Atkinson was fatigued. Should any one be suffering, Ellen would make kind inquiries, and show all the little attentions in her power, without waiting to be asked, stepping noiselessly, and considering how she could

best help the sufferer. Her mistress's grandchildren soon grew fond of Ellen, and often came to ask whether she might take them out for a walk or have a game with them.

She often wondered if her mother missed her, whether her aunt was kind and thoughtful, and how the children got on with her. Now and then a letter came from home; but though very loving, it did not tell Ellen much.

In the meantime Miss Marston called, and invited her to attend the Bible-class. It was arranged that Ellen should always have the opportunity. She was much pleased; but being a little nervous, Miss Marston kindly asked a girl living near to call and bring her new companion the following Sunday.

It was a great change. New ideas were awakened in Ellen's mind. After attending the class several times, she began to see herself in a very different light to what she had hitherto been accustomed. She had always been called a good girl by her admiring mother, neighbours, and friends; and so she was in one sense. Now, however, it dawned upon her how little she had ever thought of God. It was plain she did not love Him. She had sometimes wondered and secretly murmured at His letting her mother remain in such weak health year after year.

Ellen certainly did not understand much about

religion ; for her mother, being ignorant herself on the subject, had never been able to teach its truths, and the father, though considered a respectable man, neither knew nor wished to know much about it. She had been taught the simple fact of the gospel, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and that He died in our stead to reconcile us to God ; but the truth had never come with power to her heart. She had indeed vaguely hoped that she should one day reach heaven by the Saviour's making up any deficiency of hers in God's sight. Hitherto she had had no just sense of sin ; and therefore, not knowing her need of Christ, she cared not to trust in Him..

Now, her eyes were opened to see how in everything she had fallen short of the glory of God, how she had never sought nor wished to please Him, and how ungrateful she had been. She was terrified at the remembrance of past sins. Her conscience told her she might have known more about the Lord, if she had been willing ; but her Bible, for the most part, had seemed to her dry and uninteresting ; and when she had gone to church, she had paid but little attention to what was going on. Ellen became depressed, and her mistress could not but notice the change. Her servant seemed desirous to fulfil her duties, though it was evidently with a heavy heart. Thinking she was anxious about her mother and

home, Mrs. Atkinson kindly sent her there for a few days, hoping the holiday would do her good.

Mrs. Hunter and the children were delighted to see her; and she found things carried on much as usual, but she had been greatly missed.

"O Nellie! Aunt Betsey's so strict; often and often we've wished you back again," they exclaimed.

"My darling," said the mother, "your aunt takes good care of me, and is very cheerful; but there's no one like a daughter."

Mrs. Hunter was pleased to find how comfortable Ellen was in her situation. She had much to tell; and though the load remained on her conscience, her joy at seeing them all again made her think less about it. Her father seemed more affectionate, and Aunt Betsey made much of her.

For a day or two after her return to Carrington she felt brighter; but her depression returned, and the next Sunday at the class she could scarcely restrain her tears. Seeing this, Miss Marston detained her for a little conversation. Her kind words and sympathising manner drew forth the young girl's confidence. Amidst many sobs and tears, Ellen said how sinful she felt herself to be, seeming only to get worse and worse, and sometimes hell seemed to stare her in the face.

"Dear Ellen!" said Miss Marston, "what did Jesus Christ come into the world to do?"

"To save sinners," was the reply.

"Well now, you are taking the sinner's place, take what Jesus offers the sinner—salvation."

"But I have slighted His love and neglected Him so long!"

"He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.' He is 'mighty to save.' He 'waits' 'that He may be gracious.'"

"Then you think, ma'am, it is not too late for me to be saved?"

"*'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.'*"

"O Miss Marston! if I *could* believe!"

"You have only to take God at His word, Ellen, and believe He means what He says. You cannot work faith out of your own evil heart; but He who gives you the Saviour will give you grace to take Him and claim Him for your own. Don't look at yourself, but look at the Lord Jesus, waiting to bless you and seal you His for ever; and put your trust in Him."

"But, Miss Marston, ought I not to try to be more holy before I come to Jesus?"

"No, Ellen, He only can make you holy. He says Himself, He came 'not to call the righteous, but *sinners* to repentance.' As the hymn says—

'If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.'

And you remember another hymn—

‘Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee—
O Lamb of God ! I come.

‘Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot—
O Lamb of God ! I come.’”

“ I doubt I shouldn’t keep right, if I did come to Jesus. How am I to know, ma’am, that I shouldn’t go back again, and be as bad as ever ? ”

“ Leave yourself in His hands ; He will keep you from falling. Only go on trusting Him to keep you near to Him—

‘ He is able, He is willing,
Doubt no more.’ ”

After some further conversation, Miss Marston said—“ Let us kneel down for a few minutes’ silent prayer. I will pray for you whilst you confess your sins to God, and ask His forgiveness, because the Lord Jesus died and shed His blood for you.”

After this Miss Marston offered up a short petition aloud ; then she said—“ Ellen, will you take Him now, this loving, mighty Saviour ? ”

“ Yes, Miss Marston,” she whispered through her tears, “ I will—I do.”

God had been preparing Ellen for some time. He had made her willing ; and as soon as her difficulties were swept away in the light of Scripture, she gladly embraced her Saviour, and with Him received eternal life. Miss Marston knelt with her, to praise and thank the Lord for His great salvation, and to pray that the work begun in Ellen might be carried on by the power of the Holy Ghost ; that she might be kept from the evil of the world and the temptations of sin and Satan ; and that she might live, not unto herself, but unto Him who died for her and rose again.

"God bless you, Ellen!" said Miss Marston. "Remember you are the Lord's, and in His keeping. Go on trusting as you have begun. You must come and see me again soon," she added, shaking hands with Ellen kindly, but not before she had written a text in the young servant's Bible, with the date of the "happy day" which had "fixed her choice." Ellen's face, now so peaceful, bore witness to the relief she felt at having cast the burden of her sin at the feet of Jesus.

Her mistress and fellow-servant could not but notice how much happier she was. Now she rejoiced to think of Jesus as her own Saviour and Almighty Friend.

"I wonder whether mother knows Him as *her* Saviour! I doubt not," thought Ellen, "as she

never names Him. Poor mother! I think she would have been happier if she'd known His love! I must try to write. But what shall I say?"

Ellen was so glad she could now ask God's help with confidence, and earnestly she prayed that, for Jesus Christ's sake, He would teach her how to write.

After thinking about it for some days, she found an opportunity for writing when the cook had gone into the town.

This was the letter:—

"MY VERY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you are as well as can be expected, considering your ill health. I am happy to say this leaves me very well and very happy. I never was so happy before. I must tell you what it is that makes me so. You know I have been to class lately, at Miss Marston's, on Sunday afternoons. Well, somehow what she said made me quite miserable. I felt such a load on my heart, which nothing seemed to take away; though I enjoyed coming to see you all the week before last. On Sunday week I felt very bad. When the class was over, Miss Marston asked me to stay behind. And she did talk so kind, and so loving, it made me quite give way. But God helped her to show me that though I was a wicked sinner,

Jesus died for me, and was waiting to save me. I took Him as my Saviour, and put myself into His hands; and I know that He has forgiven me all my sins, and I am happy. Dear mother! do you know what it is to be forgiven? You won't mind my asking you this; because, if you don't, I want you to come to Jesus, and take Him as your Saviour, and He will make you His own. I think it will help you so to bear your troubles, to have Jesus for your Saviour and your Friend. Please give my love to father, Aunt Betsey, Polly, and all the other children.—I remain, dear mother, your loving daughter,

ELLEN.

“P.S.—Please write to me soon.”

The letter was folded and directed with trembling hands, and taken with the rest to the post.

Mrs. Hunter, who had never been much in the way of earnest Christians, and knew nothing personally of real religion, was very much surprised to receive such a letter, and wondered what had happened. Surely her poor child had not been going wrong in any way, that she should call herself a “wicked sinner.” No; Ellen had always been so good a girl that such an idea was not to be thought of for a moment. What could have made her unhappy about herself? and she spoke, too, of having had “such a load on her heart.”

What could it all mean? Was she going off her head? Then she wrote that she was happy again. Could it be that some illness was coming on, and that she was going to die?

Poor Mrs. Hunter became very uneasy, not knowing what was to be done. She wished she could have seen her daughter, but she had been home so lately! and it would be impossible for her—the feeble mother—to go to Carrington! It would do no good, she thought, to write, unless it were to the mistress. The best thing seemed to be for Aunt Betsey to see Ellen. Being a kind-hearted, clever person, she would perhaps make out what was the matter with her niece. After a confidential talk, the aunt agreed to the plan.

Ellen was much surprised, a day or two after, to see her aunt and little Katie make their appearance. Hastening to the door, Ellen anxiously inquired whether anything had happened to her mother, or if they had come to bring bad news of any kind; but being assured to the contrary, the visitors were most welcome; the sisters especially were pleased to meet.

Ellen's looks and actions were watched, and her words thought over by her aunt, who was relieved by being unable to discover any symptoms of approaching illness; neither could she detect anything which might prove that her niece was not

right in her head. She appeared bright and happy, and looked well.

Betsey Hunter also tried to find out, from Mrs. Atkinson and the cook, whether Ellen had been giving satisfaction, or if she had done wrong in any way; but she was evidently respected by both: they seemed fond of her, and they spoke of her very highly.

After dining with Ellen, and walking in the garden together, according to Mrs. Atkinson's suggestion, Aunt Betsey began to think she must leave to catch the carrier; but first, she would ask her niece outright about the mysterious letter.

"Ellen," she said, "what made you write in the way you did to your mother? You quite worried her. We could not think what in the world had come to you."

Ellen coloured up, and looked bewildered; but after a moment's pause, she said, "What was it, Aunt Betsey, that you and mother could not understand in my letter?"

"Why, about your being 'a wicked sinner,' of course. Whatever have you been about? Don't hide it from me, child. Your mother and I will do what we can to make things straight. She's ready to excuse everything, if you will only own to it, and do better for the future."

The poor girl's heart beat fast. She did not like

being questioned in this way, and her fears were too true, that her feelings could not be understood by her aunt, who was a stranger, Ellen felt, to all she had gone through, and to the blessed Saviour whom she had so lately learned to love; yet she knew she ought to speak out for the Lord Jesus, and it might make her aunt think about Him for herself. So Ellen prayed in her heart, "Lord, help me!" and then she replied, "Well, Aunt Betsey, I said the truth, and I said what I felt. I was a 'wicked sinner,' and I am still a 'wicked sinner' in myself; but God has taught me to trust in my Saviour; and I know that my sins are forgiven, and that I have everlasting life."

"Indeed!" said her aunt with surprise and some measure of annoyance.

"Yes," continued Ellen, "because the Bible says, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,' 'and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.'"

It was all she could do to repeat the texts in a voice at all audible.

Her astonished aunt exclaimed, "You're young to turn saint, Ellen. I don't hold with it at all. As for me, I think young folks ought to be happy and enjoy themselves. Do you know what you're about?"

"Yes; I've made up my mind; and I don't think it's dull and sad to be religious. I wish you knew

what it is, Aunt Betsey, and dear mother; there!—
what a comfort it would be to her!”

This was said in a low and trembling voice, while Betsey Hunter looked more astonished than ever, and wondered what next? At length she said—

“Well, to be sure, you are a strange girl, to think that you know so much more than your father, and mother, and aunt! I hope we shall all get to heaven at last; but it appears to me not a little presumptuous of you to say that you are forgiven now, and have everlasting life. What particular sin have you been committing?”

“No particular sin, as you would call it, Aunt Betsey. I haven’t robbed, nor been unsteady, nor drunk, nor anything of that sort; but I have not loved nor served God. It was all sin with me till I found Christ, and took Him as my Saviour. It makes me so happy to think I have such a Saviour, and one who will always stand my Friend.”

Here the conversation was interrupted, but presently Ellen gained courage to say, “You think, Aunt Betsey, it’s pride which makes us believe we have everlasting life when we trust in Jesus. Miss Marston says it is pride not to accept what Jesus offers us; and He tells us we have life when we believe on Him. And you’ll forgive my saying so, but it does seem to me when the Lord Jesus tells us anything we’re bound to believe what He says.”

Betsey Hunter looked annoyed, seeing which Ellen said, "Please to excuse me, Aunt Betsey, if I seem stuck-up, and rude to you, and don't say things in the right way."

"Yes, yes, child. I daresay you mean no offence; and I suppose you, as well as the rest of us, have got a right to hold your own opinions; only keep them to yourself, and don't make your mother's mind uneasy about you again. She has enough to bear, what with ill-health and worry."

Then after the sisters had fondly kissed each other, and Aunt Betsey had said good-bye in a kind though rather stiffer manner than usual, she and little Katie hurried off to catch the carrier.

When they were gone poor Ellen could not help shedding a few tears. She was misunderstood. The thought of this made her feel uncomfortable. She felt different from the rest: *alone* in her opinions, with no one at home to rejoice with her in her newly found joy and peace. But what pained her most at this moment was the implied unkindness to her mother, in troubling her mind, when she had already so much to bear. The poor girl had prided herself on her kind and watchful care of her; and now for Aunt Betsey to hint that she was heedlessly adding to her mother's troubles, instead of soothing her, when to lead her into the enjoyment of the happiness Ellen herself had so lately found was her one object in writing the letter!

She was, however, soon cheered by the thought that she had been enabled to confess Christ, both in her letter to her mother, and just then to her aunt. Ellen had spoken for Him in a spirit of prayer, and as best she could think at the time, and she knew He was pleased with her little effort, made in His strength, to honour Him. The thought of His approving smile filled her heart with sweet rest and gladness, her Saviour's reward for confessing Him.

Dear Ellen! she acted nobly, wisely, and well in thus witnessing for Christ!

She acted *nobly*, because she acted *unselfishly*. She allowed self to be conquered by the love of Jesus, and desire for the salvation of those dear to her.

She acted *wisely*, in thus bravely showing her colours at once. Her mother and aunt would henceforth know what to expect; and thus it would be easier for her in the future to act and speak for her Heavenly Master!

She acted *well*, in that she spoke for Christ with decision, with humility, and in a spirit of meekness and love!

On the aunt's return home, Mrs. Hunter was greatly relieved to hear a good account of her daughter's health, and that she was giving much satisfaction to her mistress; but Ellen's views on

religion made her mother feel a little uncomfortable; still she hoped that they were only the fancies of a young girl who had mixed very little with others; and that she would soon be all right again.

About a year after this, the approaching confirmation was announced in the churches. Mrs. Atkinson asked Ellen if she wished to be confirmed. She did not know; but would like "to take a few days to consider of it." Her mistress begged her to decide before the week was out, because of sending in her name to the clergyman.

Being very ignorant on the subject, and scarcely knowing why people were confirmed, Ellen determined to ask Miss Marston about it; and as soon as possible went to her for advice.

"Have you ever been baptized, Ellen?" her teacher said.

"Oh yes, ma'am! mother had us all christened when we were babies."

"Had you then repented of your sins, and believed in Christ? and did you then confess your faith in Him?"

"No, ma'am, I couldn't; it was when I was a baby."

"That is true. Yet you received the 'outward form' of sprinkling with water then; but I think the 'inward spiritual grace' which leads to

repentance and faith was wanting in your case. You are quite old enough now to understand about these things; and I trust, dear Ellen, you *have* repented of your sins; and that you not only *have* trusted in Jesus, but *do* trust Him continually, as your only and all-sufficient Saviour; is it not so?"

"Yes, Miss Marston," said Ellen brightly, and the colour came into her cheeks.

"Then there remains one thing more to be done to make the baptism of your infancy complete, and that is, publicly to confess your faith in Him."

Miss Marston then pointed out, from different passages of Scripture, that a confession of faith was necessary to baptism. She went on to speak of how, in confirmation, we acknowledge ourselves bound to give up the service and works of the devil, the world with all its sinful charms, and the unholy desires of our evil nature; bound to believe what God has made known to us in His Word, the Bible; and bound to obey God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same, not for a shorter or longer time, but all the days of our life.

To profess our intention, and solemnly promise to do this, is to profess ourselves to be the servants of the Lord.

"But," added Miss Marston, "to endeavour to keep these promises without seeking continually the 'special grace' of God in earnest, believing prayer, is a useless attempt, and must end in failure and disappointment. But you know, Ellen, where your 'great strength lies,' *out of self, in Christ*. Ask continually for the Holy Spirit to teach you your need, and to take of the things of Christ and 'show them unto you.'"

"I am very weak to do what is right," said Ellen.

"Yes, you not only are very weak, but you have *no strength at all* in yourself. St. Paul said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' and you should be able to say the same; for the feeling of your own weakness ought to lead you to trust entirely to the strength of the Lord Jesus. He is *in* each one of His people, and His strength is 'made perfect in weakness.' He overcomes sin in them when they trust in Him."

"I wish, ma'am, I could always remember these things."

"Ask for the Holy Spirit's help. When tempted to do or say, to think or feel, what you know to be wrong, *trust Jesus as your Saviour from the power of sin now, as well as your Saviour from the punishment of sin hereafter*. He will then shield you from Satan's poisoned darts, defend you from

the snares of a wicked world, and come between you and your besetting temptations. He will say to you, 'Fear not; I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward.'"

They then knelt in prayer. When they arose from their knees, Ellen said, "I should wish to be confirmed, Miss Marston."

"Think it over, Ellen, and ask yourself whether you sufficiently understand what confirmation means, and *why* you wish to be confirmed. Pray to be guided aright. Let me know what you decide when you come on Sunday."

Ellen did consider the subject and pray about it. Concluding that it would be the right thing to confess her faith in Christ, she wished to do so. Her parents did not object. Her mother believed it was the custom for all young people to be confirmed, and therefore she thought it was proper that her daughter should offer herself as a candidate; though it did not seem to Mrs. Hunter that confirmation made much difference to any of those she knew. Accordingly Mrs. Akinson sent in Ellen's name to Mr. Latimer, the good clergyman of the parish.

Ellen regularly attended his classes, and this time of preparation was to her a time of much thought and earnest prayer. More and more solemn did the profession seem to be which she was about

to make. She felt her own weakness increasingly : how could she go on without sometimes giving way to what she knew to be wrong ? She believed that there was all grace and strength for her in the Lord Jesus, but her faith was weak in laying hold of it.

Poor girl ! she was but a beginner in the Christian life, although a year had rolled by since she had first trusted in Christ. Like too many others, she looked to her own weakness instead of to the strength of Jesus, in whom every spiritual blessing is stored up for His people. Faith cannot grow by looking at *self* and surrounding enemies ; but only by "*looking off unto Jesus.*" Ellen had much yet to learn, but she was really in earnest in seeking to do the will of God, and the promise was faithfully fulfilled to her, "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

SUSAN JONES

was another from the Bible-class who was confirmed at that time. She was a decidedly Christian girl when she joined it, and had been so for years. In fact she could not remember the exact time, neither day, month, nor year when she "passed from death unto life." She could, how-

ever, call to mind a time when she felt very differently about the things of God; when she was conscious of a dislike to them, and a shrinking from them; when she was proud, rebellious, and self-willed.

The gentle Christian influence of truly godly parents, their prayers and teaching, were not lost upon their little child. She became strongly impressed with religion. The Holy Spirit gradually prepared her heart to receive Christ, to enthrone the Lord Jesus there. Almost imperceptibly He removed the barriers of pride, self-will, and unbelief which closed her heart against the knocking Saviour, until, like Lydia of old, it was opened to receive the Heavenly Guest, or rather *Occupant*; for when Jesus enters a heart, He takes up His abode there.

The change afterwards was not very marked with Susan, for there had been such a gradual softening, so much religious impression, that no one could say when her spiritual birthday took place.

When about the age of fifteen she lost her mother. This was a great grief; but whilst the family mourned their loss, they could rejoice for the dear one who slept in Jesus. The trial was sanctified to Susan. It gave a new impulse to her Christian life: she started afresh for heaven.

Soon after her mother's death, it was arranged for Susan to go to service, as her eldest sister would

remain at home to keep house for her father. Being fond of children, Susan chose to be a nursemaid. A situation was found for her in a large family, where a head nurse was kept.

It was a trying thing to the young girl to leave her home and go amongst strangers ; but she was sensible and brave. She knew it was her loving mother's wish, who had been in service herself till she married.

The evening before Susan left, her father called her into the back-parlour, and said, "Susey, my girl, sit down, and let's have a little talk before you leave your old home."

"Yes, father. The time's going fast now. I shan't like to say 'good-bye.'"

"My poor child ! don't take on so ;" and the fond father got up and stroked her hair (she had hidden her face in the cushion of the sofa on which she sat) ; he took her hand, and seated himself by her.

"Cheer up, Susan," he said, "it won't be so bad after all. You're not going a great distance off. I shall try to get over to see you before long. You'll write soon, and tell me how you get on, and how you like it ?"

"Yes, father, dear ; I'll write the first opportunity," she said, turning towards him, her face wet with tears.

"You're not going alone, Susey, though it does seem lonesome at first. God will be with you;—your dear mother's God,—your father's God,—and *your* God, Susey, eh?"

"Yes, father," she whispered; but the mention of her mother's name had called forth a deep sigh. It was but a month since her remains had been laid in the churchyard.

"You've had a great loss in the death of your mother, my child, but you must think of her being at rest in glory. She thought it best for you to go to service, didn't she?"

"Yes, father;" and after a pause, "home will never be the same to me again."

"No; dear, but God orders all for the best. Fetch me your Bible, and I'll write a text in it."

Susan ran upstairs for her Bible. When she came down she tried to be brighter, and said in rather a trembling voice, "I shall still have you and Annie and the children to come back to, father, and the boys, when they're at home."

"Yes, dear; you won't forget us, I know."

He seated himself by the table, and with some difficulty found the text he wanted. It was this, "Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him."

"There, now, that isn't such fine writing as yours, I daresay, but it ain't bad for an old man, is it?"

"No, father; I like it any way, because it's my dad's; and what are you calling yourself old for?"

"Bless your heart! how I shall miss my Sue!"

"Never mind, father; I shall come back with money to buy you a new arm-chair before long," she said gaily.

The dear old man gave Susan some good advice on several points, which she never forgot, and which was a help to her in after life. Then he knelt with his daughter and poured out his heart's desires for her in earnest, pleading prayer, which, though it brought back Susan's tears, soothed, and cheered, and helped her. Would there were more such fathers as Stephen Jones!

He was not really old, and had never considered himself so until his wife was taken away. He had felt her loss deeply, though it had been borne with Christian resignation and cheerfulness. Now his step was less elastic, and his hair was becoming more grey.

They had begun life in a humble way, Stephen and Mary Jones, but God had prospered their honest industry, and now Jones had a man under him at the bakehouse, had much enlarged his little shop, and sold groceries as well as bread. Mrs. Jones had helped to wait there before she was taken ill; now Annie or one of the boys would have to take her place.

Before they separated for the night, Susan's father came bringing a large plum cake in his hand.

"Here, Susey, what do ye think of this? You must find a corner for it somewhere."

"O father! it's too big; thanks. I really can't get it into my box."

"Never mind; take it out of your box. The little uns will like to have their share, I make no doubt."

So Annie found a basket in which to pack the formidable-looking cake, so that it should not show what it was on her sister's first arrival at her new place.

Before leaving home the next morning, Susan hastened to water the flowers she had planted the night before on her mother's grave, and to take a last look at it. Then it was time to start. Annie was ready to accompany her when she came back. After a tearful "good-bye" to her father (who had emerged from the bakehouse with apron on), and a cheery word from him, she and Annie set off to walk to the station. Two or three of the younger ones on their way to school went with them as far as they could, carrying by turns a large bunch of flowers for their sister to take with her. They had eagerly picked them from the little garden, where the air was fragrant with the scent of cabbage-roses, lavender, and southernwood. Sammy drove his

father's pony in the light cart which conveyed Susan's box to the station.

When the two sisters reached the house at Carrington, they were shown up into the nursery, where Susan was kindly received by the nurse, Mrs. Sampson. There was a hush of curiosity amongst the little ones when their new nursemaid came upstairs. Minnie whispered—

“She doesn't look so cross as I 'spected. What do you think, Harry?”

“I think we'd better wait and hear how she talks to us, Min,” said Harry with a superior air, and they went on with their play.

After nurse had had a little conversation with the girls, she called Minnie to show Susan to the room where she would have to sleep with two of the children. Here the sisters remained to have a few last words together, and to talk over the appearance of things. Then Annie said it was time to go, or she should not catch the train. Susan threw her arms round her neck, whilst the tears fell fast.

“Come, Susie, dear, cheer up,” said her sister; “you have been very brave so far. It will be all right when I'm gone, won't it, dear?”

It all seemed so strange, so unlike home, when Annie had left, though Susan made an effort to be brighter.

She was very fond of children, and soon overcame

the shyness of Minnie, and won the confidence of Harry. They became good friends with her.

Nurse felt sorry for the motherless girl, whom she liked, though there was more religion about Susan than Mrs. Sampson cared to see; but then she thought it would wear off when the girl had seen more of the world.

Both mistress and nurse learned to trust Susan. She was firm and conscientious in making the children obey; at the same time she was gentle, kind, and sympathising. She made herself one with her little charges in their troubles and their pleasures, and was very patient with them. She would sometimes take them into a quiet corner and talk of Him who blessed the little children; of His wondrous acts of love and power; of His dying to save us, and of His living again to bless us; or she would read some "sweet story of old" from the Bible, oft repeated, but always charming in its grand simplicity. She sought to win the precious souls of the children to the Lord Jesus, and it was her constant aim, with God's help, to arouse in them a desire to please their loving Saviour.

There was one drawback to Susan's comfort. Nurse had a bad temper, and when put out, or suffering from headache, her irritability was very trying.

One day the poor woman was feeling very ill, so

her mistress, Mrs. M'Donald, told Susan to take three of the children to their aunt's, who lived about a mile off, and ask if they might spend the day with their cousins. If so, she was to return and take care of the two little ones whilst nurse lay down.

She did not loiter on the way, but Miss Clara was young, and walked slowly. The children were left at Ferndale. When Susan came back, nurse, who had thought the time unnecessarily long, was unjust in blaming her with wasting time to talk with the soldiers she met, for Carrington joined Kirchester, which was a garrison town.

Susan was pained and astonished. Her mother had brought her up so differently. She had taught her daughters to be civil to all, but never to thrust themselves upon the notice of strangers, especially of the other sex. Susan's quiet, modest manner seemed to ensure her passing without annoyance; but had any liberty been taken in word or manner, in a calm and determined way she would soon have put a stop to it, young though she was. Her good mother had taught her self-respect; that is, the respect we each owe to ourselves as intelligent creatures, and accountable to God. Self-respect is neither pride nor selfishness. A young woman who respects herself will respect others also. She will not be in the company of persons of doubtful

character, neither will she go to see sights a modest girl ought to avoid, nor indulge in reading such books or papers as she knows to be improper, and hurtful to the mind.

Would that all girls were as right-minded and wise as Susan in their general conduct!

At first she quietly denied nurse's charge, saying that she had not loitered at all, but had hastened back after leaving the children. Mrs. Sampson, however, was not inclined to believe no evil. She accused the poor girl of being untruthful, and charged her with idleness and a selfish want of thought.

Susan's temper had seldom been so roused. She was a girl of strong feelings, and had been brought up in a happy home where all trusted and loved each other; so that to have her character assailed in that way was more than she could bear.

She yielded to her temper, and spoke out in an angry and disrespectful manner to nurse. When Mrs. Sampson had gone to lie down, and poor Susan had time to think it all over, she was truly sorry to have acted so unbecomingly. Though she felt she had been treated with unkindness and injustice, yet she knew she ought not to have spoken as she had, especially as she made a Christian profession; and then, too, nurse had such a bad headache! Susan's conscience was touched,

and she was very sorry for her conduct, and determined, cost what it would, she would tell nurse she regretted what she had said.

The poor girl's feelings had been tried so much that she gave way and had a good cry. Amidst all, the thought of her fond mother, whose tenderly loving, yet reproachful look forced itself upon her daughter's imagination, adding bitterness to her distress. She had scarcely dried her tears, when her mistress came into the nursery.

"What's the matter, Susan?" she said. "Are you not well? Have you had bad news from home?"

"No, ma'am; and I'm very well, thank you." Then Susan told Mrs. M'Donald all about her trouble, not seeking to excuse herself from blame.

"I am sorry," said her mistress, "both for you and for nurse. Her headaches are very bad, and whenever she is suffering from one, her temper is apt to get the better of her, and she will then say hard things which she would not otherwise say, and for which, no doubt, she is sorry afterwards. You must not take her words too much to heart at such times. Ask the Lord to make you patient. You can always pray to Him silently when you cannot kneel down. You had better reply as little as possible to nurse. She had no right to speak as she did to you, and I daresay you found it very

difficult not to answer her back ; but I hope all will be comfortable between you both again, if you will tell her you are sorry for what you have said. Mind you do that. Now, cheer up ! I am glad you have told me all ; and I hope you will always make a friend of me, Susan, for I wish to do what I can to make my servants happy."

"Thank you, ma'am," Susan replied gratefully, and her heart felt lightened.

"You have lost your mother," said her mistress ; "but there is One who says, 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted.' Do you know the best Friend, Susan ?"

"Yes, ma'am," she said with earnestness and reverence.

"I am so glad," said Mrs. M'Donald ; "you will then, I am sure, ask His forgiveness for what you have felt to be wrong. Another time look to Him to help you when you are tempted to give way to angry feelings and words. Always tell Him of your troubles. Now I have something else to say to you. A lady has called this morning to ask if I will allow any of my servants who may feel disposed, to join her Bible-class. I think we can arrange for you to do so if you like. It is held on Sunday afternoons, at Miss Marston's home, about half a mile from here. From all I have heard, you

would enjoy these meetings, and it would be a great privilege for you to study God's Word with Miss Marston. Do you think you would wish to belong to her class?"

"I should very much, if you can spare me, ma'am, without my inconveniencing you," was the reply.

"Very well; then I will write and tell her you will be glad to attend."

"Thank you, ma'am, very much," said Susan. Now she could only dwell on the thought of what was before her:—the pleasure and advantage of the Bible-teaching; the help and comfort it would be for the lady to take an interest in her; and then, if there were nice girls, how pleasant it would be to know some of them! She longed for the time to come when she could join the class, and wondered whether any of the other servants would go to it.

In the midst of her happy anticipations in came nurse. Susan coloured, and began hastily to think what she should say to her. She had, however, conned the matter over before Mrs. M'Donald came into the room.

"Nurse, I'm sorry for what I said to you this morning. I hope you'll think no more of it," Susan said, in rather a tremulous voice, as soon as Mrs. Sampson was seated.

She, being taken unawares, and not expecting

an apology, was rather at a loss how to keep up the offended dignity which she had intended to maintain.

"Well, child," she said, "I won't report of you to Mrs. M'Donald this time, as you've acknowledged your fault. I was never treated so before by any young girl; and you'd better be more careful another time. I will overlook it this once, as you've asked me to do so; but I cannot stand your giving way to such insolence and temper again."

Poor Susan! it was not a kind way of receiving her apology, and a hasty answer came to her lips; but she restrained herself, and said no more about it. She could not but feel that she also had to forgive, and nurse's speech had not made it easier to do so.

But Susan sought help from her Heavenly Friend, and not in vain. Presently she asked Mrs. Sampson how her head was. "Better, thank you."

Again there was a dead silence. However, in time, all came right.

Nurse raised no objection to Susan's going to the Bible-class on Sunday afternoons with one of her fellow-servants. They both enjoyed attending it, and the Bible lessons added much to their knowledge of Scripture. To Susan the weekly in-

struction was not only a real pleasure, but a great help heavenward.

It was not long before she had a private conversation with Miss Marston, who always endeavoured, as soon as possible, to become acquainted with the girls in her class, that she might help them individually; and Susan felt cheered and strengthened by the kind words spoken, and the prayer offered on her behalf.

She learnt to be more forbearing with nurse's temper, being aware of her own; which, it must be confessed, she showed occasionally, when she considered herself blamed unjustly; but rarely, if ever, was she out of temper with the children, who could not bear to hear her found fault with. If suddenly tempted to give way to an angry speech or manner, she knew where to look for aid, and she would ask Him who is "mighty to save," to come as a shield between her and Satan; and never did she ask this in vain. Gradually she learnt more of the evil of her natural heart, and gained the habit of looking off from self to the Lord Jesus, and that of following His command, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

She more frequently refused to listen to the angry thoughts which Satan suggested to her mind; and with the earnest, believing cry of her heart, "Lord, help me," the Tempter vanished.

Increasingly did she realise the truth of the words—

“I need Thee every hour;
Stay Thou near by;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh.”

Nurse respected the girl, and could not but feel how much better she was than herself; whilst Susan bore testimony to the power of the religion she professed.

She had come to Carrington too late to join the confirmation classes, but she heard of them through a fellow-servant who attended those Mr. Latimer held. Susan saw some of the questions the girls were expected to answer. “What an advantage,” she said to herself, “to have Mr. Latimer’s teaching on confirmation! I wish I could have been confirmed.” She resolved to take the first opportunity publicly to confess herself a servant of Christ, feeling how true were the words of a sermon she had heard, that it would be a great honour and happiness to do so, and thus, as it were, to give in her name as a soldier in His army. Then, too, Susan had often thought what a help and privilege it must be to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and she looked forward with bright anticipation to the time when she would be admitted to this blessed sacrament. The thought seemed so sweet to her that to every

believer who received them, the bread and wine were *tokens* of the Saviour's dying love—a love which cannot die, for is not Jesus Christ “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?” She wished to obey His command, and thus *remember* Him.

Therefore, when in the following year the confirmations were announced, Susan gladly came forward as a candidate. She enjoyed attending the classes, and took, as might be expected, much pains in writing out her answers. During the six weeks preparatory to the confirmation, she reflected much on the subject, and without neglecting her duties to her mistress and the children, secured as much time as possible for studying her Bible, whilst she daily prayed that her heart might be made ready for the solemn service before her. How could these weeks of preparation be otherwise than a time of blessing to her?

The Confirmation Day.

THE day fixed for the confirmation in the old church of Martyr Westmeade arrived. It had been anticipated with widely different feelings by the four about to be confirmed from Miss Marston's Bible-class. Ellen Hunter and Susan Jones had both risen earlier than usual, to have more time to themselves for reading and prayer.

Mr. Latimer had desired all his candidates to meet him in the vestry of Allhallows Church, at half-past nine o'clock, where he had prayer with them before they started for the service.

They had about a mile and three-quarters to walk. The day was bright, and never did the lark sing more cheerily, as it rose from the fields of green corn which waved in the wind. The air was sweet with the scent of hawthorn blossoms, which loaded the hedges, for the confirmation was later this year than usual.

Mr. Latimer walked with the young women, and

his curate with the lads who followed. The road was all alive with little knots of people—friends of those about to be confirmed, or others on their way to see the confirmation, or to hear the Bishop's charge. Now and then a carriage passed, or a clergyman hurried onwards. There were other processions too, for the churches in West Carrington were small, and at Westmeade there was a fine old church, so that the candidates from the parishes all round could be accommodated.

Miss Marston accompanied Ellen and Susan, who walked in front of the rest. She had some quiet conversation with them, which could not well be heard by those behind.

Ellen seemed rather sad. She was feeling the importance of the occasion, and fearing lest after confirmation she should yield to temptation.

"Do not allow yourself to fear, Ellen," said Miss Marston. "The Lord Jesus is able to keep you from falling; and supposing that, through want of watchfulness and prayer, you should at times give way, there will still be the blood of Jesus to cleanse you, and the Good Shepherd to bring you back to the fold. Will it not be so?" The lady paused, and looking kindly at Ellen, waited for her reply.

"Yes, ma'am, but I do hope I shall keep true."

"You are right to hope it, but you must do

more, you must *believe* it. So long as you fully trust in the Lord, He will keep you from falling into sin. It is not too hard a thing for Him to do. He said before He ascended, 'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.'"

"Yes, ma'am; it is nice to think of that."

"It is indeed." Then, after a pause, Miss Marston continued, "You must not *reckon upon sinning*, when you are told to *reckon yourself dead unto sin*." *

"They are very solemn promises that we take upon ourselves," said Ellen.

"They are, undoubtedly," said her teacher. "Every Christian, even the best, is liable to fall in thought, and word, and deed, continually. We all need to pray, 'Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.' Every Christian comes far short of what he or she ought to be; and it will be the same with you. But you would not wilfully and deliberately sin. You do purpose, in the strength of God, to lead a holy life, and do His will in all things, in opposition to the devil, the world, and your evil heart; do you not?"

"Oh yes, ma'am."

"Well then, you are no longer under the rule, or rather *tyranny*, of the devil, the world, and the flesh. They have lost the hold on your heart that they

* Romans, vi. 11.

once had. You have, in fact, *renounced* them—given them up.”

Ellen looked greatly relieved.

“You are not going to promise never to sin again,” said Miss Marston, “for all our lives are full of failure and shortcoming; but you will promise, in God’s strength to obey His commandments, and be guided by His will through life. You will acknowledge it to be your intention, your set purpose to do so; and more than this, believing that He who has given you the desire will also give you the power to obey, you will promise that it *shall* be so, when you say ‘I do’ at confirmation?”

“Thank you, ma’am,” said Ellen; “it seems more plain to me now.”

“Why did you not tell Mr. Latimer your difficulty when you saw him alone?” Miss Marston asked.

“I never thought to ask him, ma’am,” said Ellen; feeling sure that if she had, she would not have had courage to say to him what Miss Marston drew from her in conversation.

“I am glad if I have helped you at all,” her teacher remarked, “but I am sure both Mr. Latimer and I would willingly have done so before this, had you asked either of us. *You* are not anxious, Susan?” she inquired, turning to the dear girl’s bright face, on which the peace of God seemed to rest.

"No, ma'am," she replied. "It seems to me such a happy thing to confess Christ."

Miss Marston then left the girls to follow with the others, whilst she went forward to learn what seats had been reserved for them in church.

"Now, Nellie, you won't feel low any longer, after what Miss Marston has said, will you?" Susan asked.

"I hope not, dear. I do feel brighter."

"I can trust my Saviour to keep *me*, though I am a poor, weak sinner; and why shouldn't *you*? I hope neither of us wish to hold anything back from Him. We want to be always and wholly His, don't we?"

"I hope so," said Ellen. "I must leave with the Lord the time that's to come, and think now of the happiness of confessing Him, for I shall be glad to own Him as my Saviour and Master, Susie."

"Yes, dear, I know you will. We shall always have to be trusting Him afresh. As Miss Marston says, we cannot hoard a stock of grace. We must keep on coming to the Lord Jesus for help over and over again, every day of our lives. You remember what we had on Sunday about trusting Him to do the good work in us, and how He would perfect His strength in our weakness?"

"Yes, by the Holy Spirit. I did like that lesson."

"Let's think it over sometimes. It may help us," said Susan.

The bells, which had been ringing joyously and had sounded so sweet in the distance, became louder as the turn in the road was passed which led direct to the church. At this turn there was an open gate, and a path leading across the fields. Here Rose Collins and Eliza Thompson joined Miss Marston's other girls. Rose was looking giddy and excited, and Eliza very consequential.

"Haven't we had a rush to catch you!" exclaimed Rose, out of breath with hurrying along. "Mother only just put the last stitch in my dress a quarter of an hour ago. It don't look bad, does it? Well, to be sure!" she gasped out, "you won't dazzle anybody's eyes by *your* dress."

"We should be very sorry to do so," said Susan; "we've something much more important than dress to think about, Rose. I'm glad not to have anything on to distract my attention."

"Dear me! how good we are!" exclaimed Rose. "I don't pretend to be religious. But, really, you might have taken a little more pains in getting yourselves up for the occasion. What do you say, Eliza?"

"Oh, every one to her taste; but you can only be confirmed once in your life. I like white because it's the emblem of purity and goodness."

"There now, girls! you can't pretend to be better than Eliza, however virtuous you may be; for look at her going to every service she can, and yet she approves of suitable dress for confirmation."

"Hush! do be quiet," said Susan.

"We've no goodness in ourselves, that we should wear white dresses," put in Ellen, in a low tone. "I think *black* would be more in keeping, as to the matter of that."

"Say sackcloth and ashes," suggested Rose, and she and Eliza stifled a laugh.

On account of the turning in the road, Mr. Latimer did not see the conduct of Rose and Eliza, or he would have put a stop to it at once. Some of the candidates who could see and hear what was going on must have been surprised and shocked, I think.

"Do try and look steady," said Eliza to Rose. "It's so much more respectable. Here comes Miss Marston."

Seeing a giddy expression on Rose's face, her teacher said, "It is a solemn service in which you are to take a part. I hope you will put away all trifling. You are about to profess yourself a servant of Christ. Don't let it be a mockery," she said in beseeching tones. "I daresay you feel a little excited," she continued, "but when you go into your pew, pray for the Holy Spirit to calm your

mind, and enable you to give yourself to the Lord. It is a blessed thing, Rose, to be His servant. Do consider what an awful thing it would be to say with your lips what you do not feel with your heart, especially at such a time as this."

Miss Marston went forward with Rose and Eliza to show them the seats they were to occupy.

Rose was very smartly dressed in white, with a showy confirmation cap, which she put on at the church door. Eliza also was dressed in white, but more quietly.

It is painful to think how Rose's mother had toiled, early and late, to make a most unbecoming dress for her daughter. To an ordinary observer, no doubt, it was very becoming; but very *unbecoming*, considering Rose's station in life, and the service in which she was going to join. Poor mother! She thought much of dressing the body, but the real wants of the everlasting soul were *unthought of*.

Ellen and Susan looked very neat in their simple Sunday dresses, and the little caps they had brought with them; and so did Mr. Latimer's young women generally. I am sure Rose and Eliza would not be forgotten in prayer by the other two from the Bible-class at this solemn time.

The service began by the hymn being sung,

"Ashamed of Jesus, can it be?"

After reading the Preface, and requesting all to be seated, the Bishop addressed a few words to those about to be confirmed, lest there should be any present who did not fully understand the nature of the ordinance, and what was meant by the response they were expected to make.

"Dear young friends," he added, "you were received into the outward, professing church of Christ in baptism. You were then signed with the solemn sign of the cross, '*in token that hereafter' you should 'not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.'*"

"If you have now come to join yourselves to the Lord's people, trusting to what He did and suffered for you on earth, and to that which He is now doing for you in heaven—if you have given yourselves up to His blessed service—then do not be ashamed to confess your faith in Him.

"Confess it before an *ungodly world*; count it an honour to do so, and say, 'By the grace of God I will confess my Master and only Saviour in my own *home*, in my *place of service*, and amid *all* the daily work and labour of life.' Show that your faith in Christ *influences your lives*, making them holy and happy. Let it be seen in all you *do*, leading you to be industrious, steady, truthful, honest, kind and humble. Ask God's guidance and help continually; then *trust* Him to guide and help you. Act, not alone on Sundays, but throughout the

week, with the view to honour and please Christ in all.

“Avoid unholy, profane, angry, untrue *words*. But not only so;—as you have opportunity, speak in the praise of Him who loves you, and gave Himself for you, and thus confess Him with your *lips*, as well as by your *actions*, and the consistency of your *lives*. Remember our Lord’s warning: ‘Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father, with the holy angels.’

“Then, do not forget you were signed with the sign of the cross, ‘*in token*’ that you would ‘*fight manfully under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil.*’

“If true soldiers, you will have to ‘fight the good fight of faith.’ *Be manful*; be courageous; do not cherish a wicked thought; harbour no sinful feeling. Remember *whose* soldiers you are, and beware lest you betray your Master’s cause. Your Leader and Commander faces the foe: follow Him; obey His voice; trust Him to deliver you; and He will make you ‘more than conquerors.’ He has laid upon you a special injunction to ‘watch and pray.’ Sin is deceitful, therefore *watch*; you are powerless against it, therefore *pray*.

“Once more, you were signed with that holy sign,

'in token' that you would 'CONTINUE Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives' end.'

"If you should be tempted to grow weary in the strife—to wish to carry out your own will instead of the will of God, to shirk some of His commandments, and thus to slacken your pace heavenward—remember the promise, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.'

"Yield yourselves afresh to Him; seek a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit; and, in dependence on Him, use the appointed means of grace.

"With earnest purpose, then, and with your whole heart, let your confession of Christ to-day be made. To serve and obey Him who died to save you, who lives to bless you, is indeed a service of perfect freedom. Take His yoke upon you. Learn of Him; and one day when, your warfare being accomplished, you stand before His face, your great reward will be the 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'"

After a few minutes of silent prayer, the question was put to the candidates, the response given, and the service proceeded. When the Bishop had laid his hands on them all, the following hymn was sung:—

“ ‘Thine, Thine for ever’—blessed bond
That knits us, Lord, to Thee :
May voice, and heart, and soul respond
Amen, so let it be.

“ When this world strikes its dulcet harp,
And earth our heaven appears,
Be ‘Thine for ever,’ clear and sharp,
God’s trumpet in our ears.

“ When sin in pleasure’s soft disguise
Would work us deadliest harm,
May ‘Thine for ever’ from the skies
Steal down and break the charm.

“ When Satan flings his fiery darts
Against our weary shield,
May ‘Thine for ever’ in our hearts
Forbid us faint or yield.

“ Thine all along the flowery spring,
Along the summer prime,
Till autumn fades in welcoming
The silver frost of time.

“ ‘Thine, Thine for ever,’—body, soul,
Henceforth devote to Thee,
While everlasting ages roll :
Amen, so let it be.”

After the hymn, the Bishop said: “Now, my young friends, you have with your own lips acknowledged yourselves to be the Lord’s, and, as such, I have laid my hands upon your heads in token of God’s ‘favour and gracious goodness’ towards you.

No less certain is the fact that, in answer to your own earnest, believing prayer, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon you, than that you have submitted to the laying on of hands.

“ I trust you did not come to confirmation without already being in some measure under the Holy Spirit's influence ; for—

‘ Every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone ; ’

and ‘ if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.’ It is He who shows us our sin and need, reveals the Saviour, and enables us first to believe on Him, and then to live to Him.

“ Receiving the Holy Ghost, your bodies become the temples in which He dwells, and ‘ *ye are not your own,*’ for ‘ ye also are builded together (with all believers in the Lord) for an habitation of God through the Spirit.’

“ Again, *none can say they are their own*, for are not all the property of Him who created and preserves them ? are not all accountable to Him ‘ in whom we live and move and have our being ? ’

“ Once more, ‘ *ye are not your own*, for ye are bought with a price ; ’—‘ the precious blood of Christ ; ’—redeemed from hell and sin, at how great a cost !

“By deliberate choice, with your own lips, in answer to the question just put to you, you have professed yourselves to be the Lord’s. What a blessed choice! You are safe in His keeping. Take care not to wander away from Him.

“Seek your Heavenly Father’s blessing in earnest prayer at the opening and close of every day: and not only then, but whenever a want is felt, a danger dreaded, a difficulty to be met, or a temptation seen at hand, look up to Him for the needed supply, protection, guidance, deliverance. Whenever you feel burdened by having allowed sin to stain your conscience, come to Him confessing your guilt, and pleading the merits of a Saviour’s blood.

“Read some portion of the Word of God night and morning, with prayer for the Holy Spirit’s teaching; and during the day, let it not be unthought of, nor the Lord Jesus and His love forgotten.

“Do not seek your own pleasure on God’s holy day. Be diligent in attending His house, not forgetting to ask that you may be enabled to ‘worship Him in spirit and in truth,’ and remembering the words of your Lord, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.’

“Come to the Holy Communion as regularly as possible. If, by faith, you feed your souls on Christ

and His dying love—brought before your minds by the bread broken and wine poured out—you will be enabled to realise more fully your union with Him and His people. This will lead to greater holiness, whilst you ‘reckon yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

“May your confirmation be blessed to you by confirming and strengthening your *faith* in Him, who ‘liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore!’

“May it confirm and deepen your *love* to Him whom you have now openly professed to serve; and thus may you be led on in the way of holiness!

“May it be the means of confirming and brightening your *hope* of glory; and so may you, in union with the Captain of your salvation, tread under foot the world, the flesh, and the devil, and be ‘more than conquerors’ through Him who overcame Satan *for* you, who will overcome temptation *in* you and *with* you, and whose coming in glory to take you home may be nigh at hand.

“But if, alas! any have come to confirmation to-day with no living faith in Christ, no sincere desire to serve Him, having their hearts given up to the world, the flesh, and the devil, this service is *no true confirmation to them*. Let such turn from their sins, and—ere it be too late—seek Him who still waits

to be gracious, and is exalted to have mercy ; and if they come in humble penitence they will not come in vain ; otherwise they must perish in their sins.

“ Young Christians, let your motto for life be henceforth, ‘ Whose I am, and whom I serve,’ so that ‘ unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen ! ”

The service was concluded. Rose certainly seemed to grow more attentive, particularly when the Bishop was addressing the candidates. As soon as it was over, she spoke to Eliza, and they hurried out at a side door.

On coming from the church, Miss Marston shook hands kindly with Ellen and Susan, expressing the hope that it had been a happy time to them both, to which they agreed, saying that they had enjoyed it all. Ellen looked much brighter.

They were leaving the churchyard, when who should tap Susan on the shoulder but her father ! He had called at Mrs. M'Donald's after his daughter had left the house, hoping to take her himself to the confirmation ; having arranged for his business, he had set off early to be present on the occasion.

The good man had taken care that Susan should not see him then, lest her attention should be distracted. He had obtained permission for her to return home with him till the next day. She was delighted to see her father, and have the holiday, and also very pleased that he had been at the church. It was so nice, too, she thought, for Miss Marston and him to meet and have a few pleasant words together before she parted from them.

Poor Rose and Eliza ! As it appeared at the time, and afterwards proved to be the case, the one had been but *confirmed in worldliness*, and the other *in self-righteousness*. But to Ellen and Susan it had been a happy and blessed confirmation day.

In Martyr Westmeade, three hundred years ago, a holy man of God sealed his faith with his blood, and ascended to heaven through the flames of martyrdom ; and in the church of that same village, Ellen Hunter and Susan Jones pledged their faith in the same Lord, whom " the noble army of martyrs praise," and " the holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge."

After Confirmation.

ROSE COLLINS.

As Rose did not go to the Bible-class the Sunday after the confirmation, Miss Marston called at Westmeade Hall, being anxious to speak with her on the subject which ought to have been so much in her thoughts those last few weeks. She was busy at the time, therefore an arrangement was made for her to see Miss Marston at her house. She had invited the servant who came to the door to accompany Rose on the Sunday, and had thus inadvertently let out her secret of attending the Bible-class.

It was thought a great joke among the servants that she of all people should belong to it. They did not know she was that way disposed, and they considered her a very old child to go to Sunday school. Had they but known it, there were some attending the class as old as themselves, and much wiser.

Rose had been so sly about it too, they said. Having laid herself open to being laughed at, they

did not spare her, but amused themselves greatly at her expense. She tried in vain to pass it off, and was beginning to grow very angry and excited; but as that did not answer, she took to joking with the rest as her only way out of the difficulty, determining to go one Sunday more to let them see she was not afraid of them, and after that give up going again.

Sunday came. After Rose had endured a little bantering on the subject, she was allowed to start for the class unmolested. Had she persevered in her attendance at it after this, she would have had little or no further annoyance, for the amusement and novelty of the thing soon died out, and the servants would scarcely have troubled themselves to give it another thought.

A day or two afterwards she had her interview with Miss Marston, who was surprised to find that Rose, without any apparent cause, had made up her mind to leave the Bible-class. Miss Marston tried not to lose sight of her, feeling still a kindly interest in her, but she never could gain the girl's confidence.

In a year's time Rose sailed with a family to New Zealand, having been engaged to go with them as house and parlour maid. She had not been above a year in her situation there, when she married a pleasure-seeking, reckless young man, to

whom she was much attached. Their chief aim appeared to be to enjoy life to the utmost, in a gay and frivolous way. A day, however, dawned of terrible distress to poor Rose. Her husband was brought home, having been dreadfully injured by a runaway horse. It was a fatal accident, but the poor man lingered on in suffering for some weeks, his young wife watching him with painful anxiety. When the end came, she could hardly believe herself to be a widow. Her grief was almost overpowering. But she had one little treasure left to comfort her, a bright-eyed, merry child of two years of age, whom her mother fondly called her "rosebud."

Friends were kind, and employed Rose, and she managed to support herself and her child pretty comfortably; but the little one was taken ill, and notwithstanding every effort to save her, faded away and died. She was laid by her father's grave eighteen months after Rose had become a widow.

Lonely and heart-broken, a greater longing than ever came over poor Rose to return to her old home, and see her parents and family again. She made inquiries, and after a time took a situation for the voyage as maid to a lady returning to England.

Miss Marston received a letter from Rose, written two or three months before she sailed, in which,

after speaking of her heavy trials and of her intention to return to her native country, she said:—

“I am not what you remember me in any respect. Years of trouble have told upon me in more ways than one, and I hope, through God’s mercy, in the *best* way. I have often thought of you and your Bible-class, and wished I could have gone to it. I cared little for it when I had the opportunity. I dearly loved the world and pleasure; but such vanities seem only to mock one in times of trouble. My great sorrow first set me looking into my Bible for comfort, for I knew how much good people loved it. Things you used to say on the Sunday came back to me with a feeling of regret that I had paid so little heed to them at the time. I am now seeking that Saviour who invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him. I know, dear Miss Marston, you would have helped me to find Him years ago, but I was not willing then.

“I hope to take the liberty of calling on you after my return to my dear parents, and then perhaps you will talk to me again about the better things.

“I long to see my father and mother and my sisters. Allow me to take this opportunity of thanking you for all the kind interest you took in

me, and to beg that you will sometimes remember me in your prayers.—Believe me, dear madam, your humble servant,

ROSE ATKINS.

Rose knew that the faith which saves is more than a mere assent of the understanding to gospel truth. The promise was about to be fulfilled to her, as to all earnest seekers after Christ, "Ye shall . . . find me when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. xxix. 13).

ELIZA THOMPSON.

Miss Marston had an interview with Eliza after her confirmation. The girl did seem impressed with the solemnity of the service in which she had taken a part, but her religion was one of bondage, not of joyful gratitude. It was not long before she gave up coming to the Bible-class. After a time she was taken very ill, too ill to be removed from her mistress's house. Mrs. Thompson was sent for, who nursed her daughter until she could be taken to the hospital.

There she had leisure to think. Her mind was not at rest. A lady visitor had been to the ward, and had read something out of the Bible, and spoken to the patients about what she had read very faithfully, after which she had prayed with them in the same earnest manner. It was plain she really desired the good of those she had been addressing, and believed in answers to prayer. Before leaving she had said a few kind words to Eliza, who had been much reminded of Miss Marston by the lady's manner of speaking and praying. The teaching of past Sundays seemed to come back to her now in a way it

had never done before. It was very different to what she had previously learnt, or had at any time heard till that afternoon.

The lady had dwelt much on a text about which Eliza remembered Miss Marston speaking. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Conversion had been explained as a turning our back on all sin, and a turning round to God; a great change which must take place on all whose hearts are not under the influence of saving grace if they would be true servants of Christ.

Eliza thought, and thought again, and supposed she had all her life been more or less under the influence of saving grace, as she could not remember any great change in her feelings. Then looking back at her past life, when a little girl at home attending the village school, she remembered they always called her a good child, and sometimes the teachers put her forward as an example to the rest, and no child could say her lessons better. Eliza had no intention of being otherwise than good. Many children in the school were envious of the prizes she obtained. At home there was seldom any fault found with her. Then when in service, she learnt to do her work well, and thought she did her duty, being steady, honest, and respectable. Whenever possible, she went to the services of the parish

church, whether on the Sunday or in the week. Why should a change be necessary? She had been baptized, and, as it appeared to her, could not fail to be on the road to heaven, never having "fallen from grace."

Then the rest of the text was conned over: "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The lady had said that very little children are humble, trusting, and teachable; that they often feel how weak, and helpless, and ignorant they are. They will run to their parents in time of danger, assured of safety in their strong arms. They are ready to believe every word they are told. The lady had said that all must know something of their own need, weakness, and sinfulness, or they would not trust Jesus. She had asked her hearers if they felt too weak to stand by themselves, so that when tempted they could not help falling into sin. She had spoken of the Lord Jesus having finished the work of our redemption, and only wanting us to trust Him, to let Him take us up, and so be safe and happy for ever. "His arms are so strong!" she said. "Let Him clasp you to His heart; it is so full of love."

She had added, "Which of you are trusting to the Lord to save you, and which of you are trusting to yourselves? Perhaps some one here is thinking,

‘My life has been so respectable, and I have always attended the house of God when I have been able to do so, and I have never hurt anybody, why should I come to Jesus as a weak and helpless sinner?’ Dear friend! you are trusting to yourself for salvation; but what does God’s Word say about the Lord Jesus? ‘Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’”

Eliza began to feel uncomfortable. The lady had seemed to be speaking to her, and the more the sick girl tried to shake off the unpleasant feeling, the less she was able to overcome it. The words spoken could not be forgotten; they came to her mind over and over again. She felt annoyed with the lady, and vexed with herself for letting what a stranger had said trouble her so much. At last, to get rid of the unsettled feeling, she determined to look the matter in the face. Had she been trusting to herself? It was true she had prided herself on her good character in every way, and knew she had always felt touchy when any fault was found with her; but then who doesn’t? She had been very diligent in attending public worship, thinking it meritorious and a means of gaining the favour of God.

But now a fear arose whether she had ever rightly trusted in Jesus.

Ladies and other good people, besides the clergyman, had taught her about religion from very early years. She had tried to follow out what they said. Could she have misunderstood their meaning? If the Saviour had done all the work of our salvation, as the lady had said, what was it that was expected of her? She pondered over her perplexities during her waking hours at night and more or less all day.

But the lady had said something which gave a gleam of hope to Eliza. She had asked, "Which of you do not understand these things, and, like little children, are willing to be taught? Ask God, for Christ's sake, to teach you by His Holy Spirit. He will make the truths of Scripture plain to you." Eliza felt she *was* willing to be taught. She had begun to long for some one to explain her difficulties, and to show her what the real state of her soul was.

The lady came again a few days after; but her visit, instead of giving Eliza the comfort she had looked for, only added to her distress of mind. It brought to light her pride and self-righteousness; and the more she considered the subject, the more sinful did she feel herself to be. She saw something of the evil of sin. Pride had indeed run as a vein through her whole life, but beside this, she began to see with horror sins of selfishness, worldliness of

heart, and unconquered will ; instances of sullenness of temper, of bitter feeling, of hasty words, of want of consideration for her mother and sisters. How continually, when in the house of God, had she indulged in wandering thoughts ! She felt convicted at last of having no real love to the Saviour—no trust in Him.

Distressed and very anxious, she hid her face under the bed-clothes to conceal her tears and choke the sobs which would not be kept back. She had become quieter when the lady went round speaking to each patient in a kind, sympathising way. At last the visitor came to Eliza. It was dusk, and Miss Morris did not notice that the poor girl had been crying. Eliza had thought of asking the lady to stay a little while with her, and then, when the opportunity came, she shrank from doing so lest it might not be convenient, and then what should she say if she did ask the lady to stay ? how should she put it ? So the sick girl allowed her to leave, and, at the same time, felt vexed with herself for doing so. “ Oh, if I could but see Miss Marston ! ” she thought ; “ there is no one I should like so well to talk to.”

Soon the ward was lighted up, and tea-time came. Eliza could scarcely take anything, and the nurse saw that she had been crying, and said, “ Come, my dear, what’s all this about ? I suppose

you're getting tired of lying a-bed, and feel a little lonesome and home-sick. You must cheer up, like a brave girl; so don't let's have any more of this fretting, or else I don't know when we shall let you go home. Now drink this, will you? Come, I shan't let you off. There now! that's something like," as Eliza gulped down the cup of milk. "I shall come again soon and see how you get on."

Eliza felt very depressed, but she did not give way to tears again. She slept better that night after taking a sleeping-draught; but her sadness returned in the morning. She took but little breakfast. When the doctor came round, he saw that something was on her mind.

"What's the matter, Thompson? You're not so well to-day," he said. "Tired of being a prisoner, eh?"

"I shall be glad to go home, sir, when I'm able."

Seeing that he had not hit the mark, he tried to discover some cause for the trouble elsewhere.

"Haven't seen your mother lately, have you?"

"Yes, sir; she came here last visiting-day."

"Had bad news?"

"No, sir."

"Has any one said anything unpleasant? I'm sure your nurse is very good to you."

"They're all good to me ; I've nothing to complain of, I'm sure."

"Well then, you must not behave ill to yourself. You're weak after your illness ; but it will not do to give way to tears, or else we shall never get you to do us credit. Nurse, can't you find some one to read or talk to her a little ?"

"I'll see, sir."

Presently a nice young girl brought her crochet and sat by Eliza, who felt somewhat cheered by a little friendly intercourse.

It was a visiting afternoon. Eliza watched the relations and friends of the patients come in. She knew she should not see her mother, who had written to say that she would be too busy that day to look in upon her. Presently a lady entered the ward, and looked on either side for the patient she had come to visit, but did not seem to recognise Eliza, who had discovered, to her surprise, that it was none other than Miss Marston. She passed Eliza's bed, and was directed to a young woman on the opposite side. As soon as they were engaged in conversation, Eliza beckoned to nurse, and said in a low voice—

"I know that lady. I was in her Bible class. Will you please ask her if she would mind coming to speak to me when she leaves Hatchard ?"

"Very well, my dear."

What a long time Miss Marston seemed to be there! It appeared as if she would never leave; and time was slipping away. No visitors were allowed after four o'clock. Eliza longed and yet dreaded to see her. What should she say to her? They had not met since the day Miss Marston called and heard that she was not coming again to the class.

Eliza, not having quick feelings, was naturally neither excitable nor eager. She was generally composed and reserved, and rather cold in manner. But her feelings had never before been much roused. There was more underneath the surface than might have been supposed. The anxiety she felt, together with her weak state of health, caused a nervous excitement most unusual to her.

At last nurse, seeing Miss Marston about to leave the ward, went up to her and said, "If you'll excuse me addressing you, ma'am, but here's a young woman who says she knows you, and would like to speak to you, if it's not troubling you too much."

"Certainly not," was the reply, "I will come with pleasure."

"Eliza—Eliza Thompson, is it not?"

"Yes, ma'am. I've wished so much I could talk to you. It's very kind of you to come."

Miss Marston had never seen her look so pleased nor so nervous before.

"I'm glad to see you, Eliza," she said; "but sorry that you should have had occasion to come to the hospital. How long have you been here?"

"Two days over the week, ma'am."

"And what complaint are you suffering from?"

"It's been rheumatic fever, ma'am. I had not felt strong for some time, and then I caught a bad cold, and was laid up. Miss Jenkins, my mistress, was very kind, and sent for mother to nurse me; and it was some days before they moved me here."

"I fear you have had a painful illness, Eliza," said Miss Marston, in a sympathising tone. "Do they think you are going on well now?"

"Not quite so well the last day or two." She coloured up and added, "I have gone through a great deal lately, more than any one would think."

"Perhaps it tires you to talk?" said Miss Marston kindly, noticing her changing colour.

"Oh, it will do me good to have a talk with you, ma'am! for I want you to know what's been on my mind since I came here. I think you can put things in a clear way to me."

"What is it?" as Eliza still hesitated. "I shall be very glad to help you, if I can. Tell me plainly all that is on your mind."

"Thank you, ma'am. It was the day after I was brought here that a lady came to visit the

ward, who reminded me of you very much. She read out of the Bible, and explained it, and spoke mostly on Matt. xviii. 3, and then she made a prayer."

Here Eliza, who had kept a mark at the place in her Bible, handed it to Miss Marston, and then continued, "She said what made me wonder whether I was trusting to the Saviour or not. She spoke about our having to feel our own weakness, like little children; and our ignorance, and that we're so helpless; and then we must put ourselves into the hands of the Lord Jesus, just as the little things will run to their mother's arms to be taken up, and will rest safe and happy there."

Eliza paused for breath after this unusual effort. Seeing the relief it would be to tell all, Miss Marston encouraged her to continue, and begged her to take her time, as the bell for the dismissal of the visitors would not ring for several minutes. Having thought it all over so often, Eliza could remember much. With a trembling voice she related what had caused her most anxiety, and the address which had led her to see she was a guilty sinner in the sight of God. After this the poor girl could keep up no longer, but burst into a flood of tears. Miss Marston took her hand kindly, and, after a short pause, said—

"I am so glad, Eliza, you have told me about

your trouble. I trust God will enable me to help you by showing you the way out of it. It is He who has taught you, by what the visiting-lady said, that you are a sinner."

"Yes, ma'am," put in Eliza; "I think it must be God who has made me see myself to be so wicked, because when you used to say, at the class, how bad we were in ourselves, I never took it in then. I did not know what you meant. I was much too proud," she added, "to think that I was a lost sinner."

"We are not naturally aware of our sinful state," said Miss Marston, "but as you have been led to see something of it, I hope you have given up all hope of winning heaven for yourself. You will never be able to reach that holy place by your own good works and church-goings, nor by anything else of your own; and even if you could, what of the many sins of your past life, of which you are conscious? But though you are a lost sinner in yourself (as I was till the Saviour, in His pitying love and mercy, sought and found me), yet there is the same blessed Saviour for you, who invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him. Trust Him to do the whole work of your salvation *in* you, as when on earth He completed the work of redemption *for* you, by suffering the punishment in your stead."

Miss Marston then found the 24th verse of the

2d chapter of the first Epistle of Peter, and asked Eliza to read it aloud, changing the words "our," "we," and "ye" for *my*, and *I*. "Who His own self bare *my* sins in His own body on the tree, that *I*, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes *I am* healed."

Eliza looked touched, yet puzzled. After some hesitation she said, "But must we not try to obey God and keep His commandments, and do our duty to Him and our neighbour?"

Miss Marston paused. At length she said, "I think I can best answer you by telling you what happened to me when I was a child. I fear it will take too long now, as the time is nearly up. But I shall hope to see you next visiting day, and will tell you then. In the meantime, I should like you to read, and think over, the 3d chapter of Romans from the 20th to the 28th verses. Ask God to show you the truth, by His Spirit, for the Saviour's sake."

Miss Marston then shook hands and left, as the bell was ringing to dismiss the visitors.

"Thank you, ma'am," said Eliza; "I am so glad you will come on Wednesday."

It was a great relief to the sick girl to have found some one who could feel for her in her troubles and difficulties, and by whom she hoped to receive the needed help. She was so glad she had made a

friend of Miss Marston, and looked forward with pleasure to her promised visit.

At last the day came, and early in the afternoon Miss Marston. After making kind inquiries of Eliza, she said, "I promised to answer your question about obeying God, and doing our duty to Him and our neighbour, by telling you of an incident in my own life. So I will begin at once. It was when I was about ten years old. I was a light-hearted, heedless child, and particularly fond of having my own way. My parents had left me in the charge of an aunt and uncle when my father was ordered to sail with his regiment to India, and my mother accompanied him. I had previously known almost nothing of her relations. At first I was fairly obedient to them, as my parents had expressed their earnest hope that I would be a good child, and do as I was bid. But when more restraint was put upon me than I had been accustomed to bear, I began to think, foolish and ignorant child that I was! that I had never been told in the Bible to obey my aunt and uncle, but only my father and mother. I did not see that during the absence of my parents, my aunt and uncle stood in their place to me. I took the kindness I received as a matter of course, and became disobedient and indifferent to their wishes. I did not then know how affectionately they felt

towards me, doing all in their power for my benefit and comfort, even at the expense of much self-denial on their part. A time came when I bitterly repented my ingratitude.

"One day I went for a picnic with my aunt and uncle and a large party of friends, young and old, to Rocklyn Tower, a beautiful ruin overlooking the sea. I can well remember how I enjoyed the long drive through the woods, and how merry we all were, also what a fine sunny day it was. The afternoon passed very quickly and pleasantly; and then we children were sent in search of sticks to light the fire for boiling the kettle, as we were going to have our tea on the grass in the shade of the ruins. I had my own little garden at home, in which I took great pride. Looking about I caught sight of some rather rare ferns growing on the cliffs, and I determined to root up some to take home with me, after tea. 'Helen, remember you are not to go on the cliff near the beacon,' my uncle said. Rambling along afterwards I again came in sight of some of these ferns which I was so eager to possess. I skipped along, heedless of where I was going, till the cliff became steeper and very high. Then I stopped and saw the beacon frowning down upon me. I knew I ought not to have gone there, but I was resolved that nothing should stop me from

securing the ferns, since I had come so far for them; besides, they were the very ones I wanted.

“Not having seen me for some time, my aunt became anxious, especially as one of my companions had told her that she saw me go up the cliff. My uncle hastened on in the direction pointed out, calling my name. Not meeting with me, he became alarmed.

“In the meantime I had scrambled up to the most dangerous part, where the ferns grew best in the crevices of the rocks. I had almost possessed myself of one, when I heard my uncle’s voice at a short distance, calling my name in a distressed tone. I hastily gave a last tug at the fern, which broke off suddenly, and down I fell.

“I shall never forget the feeling of despair and dread when I found myself rolling over and over. Happily my fall was broken by a bush. Clutching some of the lower twigs, I endeavoured to save myself, but in vain. There being no shore at the foot of the cliff at this part, I fell into the water, and was being carried out to sea.

“My uncle was at no great distance. Hastily taking off his coat, he swam after me. Twice had I sunk. On rising again my uncle caught me, and swam with me to the shore beyond the rocky part over which I had fallen. Help had arrived, and I was speedily carried into a boatman’s cottage,

where I received all necessary care and attention from my sadly anxious aunt and others. After a time I was wrapped up and taken home, but the shock which I had had, together with the fall into the water, brought on a feverish attack, and it was some days before I was allowed to leave my bed.

“My aunt and uncle treated me with the greatest kindness and care. They never reproached me for my disobedience and wilfulness. Sometimes I wished they would, for I had begun to see how bad my conduct towards them had been, and to feel remorse for my ingratitude. I felt as if I should have been less unhappy if they had reproved me or treated me with the coldness which I deserved. The more I thought of my conduct before the accident the worse and more ungrateful it seemed, and the more unhappy I became. I shed many tears in secret, but I was too reserved and proud to tell my aunt and uncle how sorry I was for my behaviour the day of the picnic, as well as for the trouble I had given them so frequently before then, through my self-will and heedlessness of their wishes.

“However, at last I could bear it no longer. My dear uncle had been reading to me, and had brought me a present, a pretty story-book to amuse me.

“‘O Uncle Will!’ I exclaimed, as I threw my arms round his neck and burst into tears.

“‘What is it, Helen?’ he said kindly.

“‘I am so unhappy,’ I sobbed out. ‘I am so sorry.’

“‘Sorry for what, my darling?’

“‘I have been so naughty to you and auntie,’ I said at last, with a great effort.

“‘We will forget the past, my child,’ he said, kissing me.

“‘I cannot forget how naughty I was about the ferns that day I fell into the sea,’ I gasped out, in a voice sinking to a whisper; ‘and you were so good, and auntie too! and you have both been so kind to me!’ I added.

“My uncle spoke very gently and wisely to me, and then said, ‘Your aunt and I will forgive it all.’

“‘I can believe that,’ I said. After a pause I continued, ‘Uncle Will, I love you dearly, and auntie too! What can I do to please you, and to show you how much I love you?’

“‘Be always obedient in future, my child, and try to carry out your aunt’s and my wishes, as well as to do exactly what we tell you. This will please us, and show that you really love us; and I know you will do so,’ he said.

“From that time I became a different child. I

tried to be obedient, and to please my good aunt and uncle in all things. It did go against the grain sometimes ; but when I remembered their kindness and forgiving love to me, it seemed no longer hard to give up my own will and way, but a positive pleasure to do so, and thus to show my love and gratitude to them."

Miss Marston paused.

"I don't wonder, ma'am, that you became obedient after all, and they so kind to you!" Eliza said.

"You see," remarked Miss Marston, "it was not till I had proof of my aunt and uncle's love to me—not till I knew and believed in their love—that I cared to please and obey them. My uncle rescued me from death by drowning, and then, by using all suitable means to revive me, my aunt and others saved my life when I was brought on shore. Yet even my uncle, in swimming after me, ran but little risk on my account. The Lord Jesus not only risked His life, but laid it down for you. My aunt and uncle loved me before I cared for them. Notwithstanding all my ingratitude and disobedience, they loved me still, and freely forgave all when I confessed how wrong I had been, and how much I regretted the past. They forgave me without reproaching me for it ; and this is God's way to His people : ' If we confess our sins, He is faith-

ful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He says, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' Think of all His kind care of you all your past life. I am sure the 'Great Physician now is near,' and I believe He is going to heal you both in body and soul. You have the greatest proof of the love of God to you in that He has given His own Son to suffer and die in your place, that you might have eternal life. I want you to be able to say, 'I have known and believed the love which God has to me.' 'We love Him because He first loved us.' When you really believe in His love, you will gladly seek to obey Him and please Him in all things; and obedience, though it may call for self-denial, will be no longer drudgery. Now I shall go, Eliza, as I do not wish to tire you; and, if possible, I will come again on Saturday."

Eliza felt unwilling to part with her kind friend, but her heart was too full to express more than the hope of seeing her again on Saturday. Leaning back on her bed, the sick girl gave herself up to thinking over the recital which had deeply touched her feelings. Her heart was unusually softened. A sweet sense of the Lord's many mercies was brought to her mind, like a breath of heavenly fragrance. She hid her face in her pillow, which was soon wet with tears. Shortly afterwards she

fell asleep quite exhausted. Tea followed on her awaking, and she was not able to pursue her quiet thoughts again that night.

In the morning she longed to dwell on the goodness of God, but instead of looking to the Saviour of sinners, her long-indulged misconceptions gained the better of her, and she tried to comfort herself with resolutions to read daily so many chapters of her Bible. Poor Eliza! her conscience gave her no peace; the harass of her mind was greater than before. She knew her heart was not right with God.

Saturday came. Eliza's face lighted up as she saw Miss Marston enter the ward, and take the chair beside her.

"How good of you, ma'am, to come again so soon!" was the invalid's exclamation, after answering Miss Marston's kind inquiries.

"Oh, it is a pleasure to do so! But it would give me far greater satisfaction to find that you had accepted God's 'unspeakable gift' of a Saviour," Miss Marston replied.

Eliza could not say that she had done so, but wished she could. She thought she had not faith enough, and that, therefore, it was necessary to wait till more was given her.

"Oh, Eliza! that is a sad mistake," Miss Marston said; "it is a temptation of Satan, who wants to keep you back from Christ. If you have any

faith at all, you have enough for salvation, which does not depend upon the *measure* of our faith, but on Christ's finished work."

"I doubt, ma'am, I haven't any faith at all," said Eliza with tears in her eyes.

"Supposing we drop the subject of faith for a time, and talk about the Lord Jesus and His precious promises. You do read your Bible, I'm sure?"

"Oh yes, ma'am; more than I have ever done before."

"And you believe it to be the Word of God?"

"Yes, ma'am, but I can't think how it is. I have read chapter after chapter, and yet I don't seem as if I could get faith."

"Ah, Eliza! the old self-righteousness is at the root of all. It is not the *amount* of your reading which will result in faith. Far be it from me to discourage your Bible-reading; but it is the *spirit* in which we read, and not the mere number of chapters read, which God blesses. We must look to Him to teach us by His Spirit when we read, and we must believe that He means what He says. One promise of salvation or blessing, so taken and rested upon, though it may be only a text, or part of a text, will be far more to you than the whole Bible read without your looking up to God to bless it to you, and to make it a message to yourself."

"But I am so undeserving."

"Do you think you will *ever* deserve the favour of God? The longer you wait the less deserving you will be. Depend upon it, salvation has nothing to do with your own righteousness and deservings. When you kneel in prayer, do you expect God to hear and answer you for His Son's sake?"

"I hope He will, ma'am. I have spent a great deal of time trying to pray."

"Do not try another form of works, Eliza, by thinking that you will be heard for your 'much speaking.' God's ear is open to hear the simplest cry of those who come to Him in His Son's name."

"It doesn't seem as if God had heard my prayer, for I don't feel a bit better or happier," said poor Eliza, bursting into tears, and adding, "O Miss Marston! do you think I shall ever be good?"

Miss Marston took her hand kindly, and said gently but decidedly, "No, never, Eliza, till you come to the Lord to be made so. You can never make yourself good in God's sight by anything you can do or suffer. Will you not believe that what St. Paul said of his natural heart is true of yours also: 'I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing'? When you come to the end of self, and see that you are utterly powerless, then I am sure you will take the Lord Jesus; or perhaps I had better say, you will let Him take you and make you His. And as to your feelings, never mind about

them. Trust to the Lord to save you first, and right and happy feelings will come sooner or later as the natural consequence."

"I will try, ma'am."

"No, Eliza, leave off trying, and *trust*. You remember about the lost piece of silver in St. Luke xv., do you not?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You are like it, for you can do no more to save yourself than it could, and that was absolutely nothing. It lay hidden and motionless. The Lord is seeking you. Let Him raise you from the dust of sin to eternal life and blessedness. Leave yourself in His hands—His outstretched hands of love and power.

"I heard of a child the other day," Miss Marston continued, "and I want you to take a lesson of trust from her. She was in one of the bed-rooms of a house which was on fire. It was supposed that she had been removed with the rest to a place of safety, when, awakened by the noise and flames, she appeared at the window, and threw it open, crying, 'Save me! oh, save me!' in tones of terror and distress. Being a lonely country place, neither fire-escape nor ladder was at hand. A few minutes more and the child must perish, unless something could be done to rescue her. Her father came quickly forward in great alarm and

called to her, 'Sit on the window-sill and then throw yourself down, Polly. Don't be afraid, I'll catch you.' The child trembled and hesitated for a moment, notwithstanding the danger she was in from the spreading flames, falling timber, and almost suffocating smoke. 'Come, Polly. You'll be burnt if you stay there, my dear. I can see you though you cannot see me. I won't let you drop, I promise you. You may trust me to save you. My arms are strong enough.' The child knew her father's voice, and hesitated no longer. She made up her mind, threw herself down, and was safely folded in her father's arms. You have discovered your danger, Eliza; but the Lord Jesus calls to you, 'Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest.' Trust the promise of Him who is able to save to the uttermost, make up your mind, and cast yourself into the arms of His power and love; they are opened wide to receive you." Saying which Miss Marston shook hands with her and left.

It may seem strange that one who was so desirous for salvation as Eliza, did not embrace the truth sooner. But several times, when she was on the point of committing herself to the Lord's keeping, some fresh difficulty would start up to hold her back. The enemy of our souls is eager to deter us from Christ, and there are many snares for the self-righteous. Happy those who press forward

through all difficulties to the Saviour! Some are gently led to Him, but others have to fight their way.

The next time Miss Marston visited Eliza, she was disappointed to find her apparently more dejected and anxious than before. But it is said that the night is darkest before the dawn.

"How is Eliza going on, nurse?" Miss Marston asked.

"Well, ma'am, not quite so fast as we could wish; but then she's got low, and she hasn't the spirits to rise above things as some folks have. She's apt to be a little depressed; now aren't you, you naughty girl? I'm glad you've come to cheer her, ma'am," saying which the nurse walked away.

"I hope you feel better than when I last saw you, Eliza?" was Miss Marston's inquiry.

"I cannot say I do, ma'am, thank you; I'm so weak. If I sit up but a very little while I am so tired."

"It is very trying to continue so ill; I dare say you become weary of lying in bed."

The poor girl felt that sickness and weakness would be comparatively easy to be borne, if only her mind were at rest. In vain she tried to repress the tears called forth by the sympathising tones of Miss Marston's voice, who took her hand, and pressed it, saying, "Are you fond of flowers, Eliza? I have brought you some geraniums. Nurse will

put them in water, and stand them by you. I thought, too, you might like to have some grapes."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Marston; how kind you are! and what lovely flowers!" said Eliza, cheering up.

Some fresh difficulty had been harassing her with regard to repentance. Discovering this, Miss Marston explained to Eliza the verses she had studied, according to her teacher's wish, in the third chapter of Romans. She said that justification meant, in the first place, our *being cleared from the condemnation of all sin*, as in Acts xiii. 39, "*justified from all things*;" and in the second place, it meant something even beyond that, our being reckoned *positively righteous*, as in verses 21, 22 of Romans iii., "the righteousness of God which is . . . unto all and upon all them that believe," and Romans iv. 5. *How long does justification last?* For ever, for he that believeth "*shall not come into condemnation*" (John v. 24), and the righteousness in which he stands in "*everlasting*" (Daniel ix. 24).

That no one can be justified *in himself*, for "in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxliii. 2).

Neither can any one *justify himself* by endeavouring to fulfil God's law, for "by the deeds of

the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20).

Justification is *God's work*. "It is God that justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33).

Who does God justify? Not the innocent, as in our earthly courts of law, but "the ungodly" (Rom. iv. 5).

When does God justify? When first we believe in Jesus. "By Him all that believe *are* justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39).

How does God justify? "Freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24).

Miss Marston reminded Eliza that "freely" meant without taking anything in return, without any payment or compensation of any kind; that all was of God's grace, His favour to the undeserving, when they trust to the blood-shedding, the sufferings and death, of His well-beloved Son on their behalf. True faith was explained to be the *resting of the heart on the Lord Jesus and on what He has done for us*. Being able to say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me," "my Lord and my God," we further trust Him to accomplish His work of salvation *in us*.

"Have you put yourself into His hands, Eliza? Are you trusting Him?" Miss Marston asked.

There was a pause. At last Eliza said, "I wish I could believe!"

"Then you do not think the Saviour is worthy to be trusted?"

"Oh, it isn't that!"

"Do you not believe that He is *able* to save? God's Word says, 'He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.'"

"Yes, I suppose He can do all things, because He is God."

"Surely, Eliza, you do not doubt His *willingness* to save you, when He died for that purpose? His invitation or command is, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden,' and it is coupled with the promise, '*I will* give you rest.' Listen to the voice of the Lord Jesus, and act upon it. He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Stretch forth thine hand.' The man listened to the voice of Jesus, believed in His power and willingness to heal him, and therefore obeyed His command, and you know the consequence.—In stretching forth his hand, he found the needed power was given him, for 'God's orderings are His empowerings.' The hand which had hung helpless, perhaps for years, was restored whole, like as the other. Will you read aloud Acts v. 31?"

"'Him hath God exalted with His right hand to

be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.’ ”

“ Yes. Do you not see, Eliza, that the Lord Jesus is exalted to heavenly glory in order to *give* repentance and forgiveness of sins? Repentance does not mean sorrow for sin; though sorrow for sin follows upon repentance. It means a *change of purpose*—a change of mind, as we say. I think the Lord Jesus is giving you that change of mind. You wish to turn from sin, do you not? ”

“ Oh yes, ma’am! ” said Eliza earnestly.

“ And you wish to turn to God: you desire to believe in Jesus, and to live to Him, do you not? ”

“ Yes, that I do indeed! ”

“ Then take the Lord Jesus, just as you are, to be your Saviour, and ask Him to receive you. Let us pray. Will you not, Eliza, now give yourself up to be saved by Him? ”

Miss Marston knelt down by the bedside, and offered up a short and simple but earnest prayer, in low tones which none but Eliza could hear, whilst she raised herself in bed, and covered her face with her hands.

Then Miss Marston rose, and whispering “ Good-bye; I will come again on Wednesday,” left Eliza in the same position.

The “ morning without clouds ” dawned upon

Eliza. The "Sun of Righteousness" arose "with healing in His wings," for she took the Saviour to be her Saviour, and gave herself to Him. The joy and peace which succeeded the gloomy doubts and depression of her soul resembled the sudden burst of summer over a dreary landscape of ice and snow in North-West America; or, to use the beautiful language of the Song of Solomon, "The winter was past, the rain was over and gone, the flowers appeared on the earth; the time of the singing of birds was come, and the voice of the turtle was heard in our land."

The next time Miss Marston came, she and Eliza united in praise and thanksgiving with tears of gratitude and joy.

Henceforth what a reality and comfort she found in prayer and praise! How delightful her Bible became to her! She looked much happier, and made more advance towards recovery.

"Well done, Thompson!" said the nurse; "it is plain you don't mean to stay here much longer. You're going to do us credit at last."

"Oh, nurse, I'm so much happier! It's mostly that that makes the difference, I believe."

"Did you ever know anything like it? After all the doctoring, and nursing, and care you've had! What makes you happier?"

"Please don't think me unmindful of all that's

been done for me here. I am really thankful to you and all, nurse. But there's no cure like a lightened heart. I am happy because I have found my Saviour. Won't you seek Him, nurse? I wish you would."

Nurse said nothing, and went to another patient.

The time came for Eliza to leave the hospital, when she went home for a few weeks before going into a new situation. Through her illness she had lost her former place. Miss Marston found her another, and one in which she could regularly attend the Bible-class, which henceforth she valued as she had never done before.

Eliza was always a good servant, but still more so when governed by Christian principle. She conducted herself well, and consistently with her religious profession, and her mistress knew how to value her.

Good servants will always be held in high estimation; but how much more valuable do they become when they endeavour to do their duty, and please their earthly masters and mistresses, with the view, above all, of pleasing their Heavenly Master!

Eliza was naturally a quiet girl, and she goes on steadily, and is happy and contented.

As she has opportunity, she endeavours to speak a word for Jesus her Lord, and to do what she can to show her love to Him; for her love and faith,

and courage also, have grown by exercise. Her Christian influence, too, has not been lost in her own home.

Eliza remains in service, adorning it in a modest, unobtrusive manner; for Jesus, the Son of God, has made her free—free from self-righteousness, from sin and Satan—free to serve Him whose “yoke is easy and whose burden is light,” and “whose service is perfect freedom.”

Yet notwithstanding this blessed state of privilege, she feels increasingly the need of watching against temptation, the danger of looking to herself, the great importance of “looking off unto Jesus,” who only is “able to keep” her “from falling,” and whose voice, I doubt not, she will one day hear, saying, “Well done, good and faithful servant! . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

ELLEN HUNTER.

Ellen had been received into Mrs. Atkinson's service when young and ignorant. She had taken great pains to improve under the teaching of her mistress, who had raised her wages more than once. When Ellen had been three years with her, Mrs. Atkinson considered the girl deserved a further advance, which would be more than she felt equal to give. On naming the subject to Ellen, she replied that she had rather remain with her present wages, if Mrs. Atkinson was satisfied with her, than go where she might receive more money, but might not be so comfortable, and probably would not have such religious advantages. Her mistress wished her to take a little time to think about it.

Considering the subject, Ellen said to herself, "Why should I want more? my parents are not poor, and I am very happy in this place. I have learnt all I know here, and it would seem ungrateful to leave for higher wages, for a time, at least."

In a few days Mrs. Atkinson again spoke to Ellen, but she continued in the same mind, and her mistress was very glad to keep her. However,

great losses in the family, in consequence of a bank failure about six months after, obliged Mrs. Atkinson to reduce her expenses as much as possible, and made it necessary that she should part with one servant, so she very reluctantly gave Ellen notice to leave.

"I think I know of a situation where you would be comfortable," she added, "and where higher wages are given. It is at Mrs. Ainger's, at Fairtree, about six miles from here."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Ellen, with tears in her eyes. "You've been a kind friend to me, and I do not like leaving you at all."

"Indeed, Ellen, I feel sorry to part with you, and would not do so could I have afforded to keep two servants. Consider whether you would like to go to Fairtree;" and Mrs. Atkinson told her all the particulars she knew about the situation.

Ellen did think it over, and prayed to be guided aright. The idea of leaving Carrington seemed less desirable every time she thought about it. There would be the giving up her attendance at the Bible class which she valued, and would miss so much on a Sunday afternoon, and she had many friends in it. Then too, not to be able to speak to Miss Marston, whom she dearly loved, not only because she had always proved a wise and sympathising friend, but also because she had been the means of rous-

ing Ellen to a sense of sin and danger, and leading her to the Saviour. So she decided, if possible, to remain in Carrington, and take a place where she could still attend the Bible-class. Mrs. Atkinson approved of her decision, and undertook to make inquiries for her amongst friends. Ellen made it a matter of daily prayer that God would guide her to the right place. It was not long before her mistress heard of a very promising situation vacant. She sent Ellen to see about it that afternoon. The lady was much taken with her neat appearance and pleasant manner. Ellen too thought Mrs. Linton such a "nice-spoken" lady, especially as she agreed to give her the opportunity of attending Miss Marston's Sunday class. It was decided, should her character suit, that Ellen was to come to her as parlour-maid on leaving Mrs. Atkinson.

The new situation was, on the whole, a happy one, but it was not without its trials. The housemaid, who was eighteen (but two years younger than herself), became very jealous of her, and tried to annoy her by word and deed, thinking her to be a favourite of her mistress.

Poor Ellen felt her rudeness and unkindness very much. It had been so different with her at Mrs. Atkinson's. She tried to bear it all patiently, and hoped that in time Emily would come round. The cook, too, became prejudiced. But Ellen looked

upwards for help and comfort, and never looked in vain.

As she took it all very quietly, they despised her as spiritless, and determined to play some trick upon her, to rouse her temper, and thus have something definite to say against her.

Knowing how much she valued her Bible-class, and that she would not miss attending it, if she could possibly help, they thought one Sunday it would be great fun to hide her things and prevent her going. They went up to her bedroom, as soon as they had finished dinner, and stowed away Ellen's jacket in one place and her Bible in another; but the crowning part of their joke was carried out amidst much suppressed laughter: Emily took out Ellen's neat bonnet, bought for her new place, and with the aid of an umbrella and chair, hoisted it upon the head of a stone bust which represented Mrs. Linton's father, and which stood on the top of a book-shelf on the landing near the attic stairs, a part of the house little frequented by the family. The servants then came down into the kitchen, and tried to appear as if nothing had happened.

Presently Ellen went upstairs to get ready for the class. The two others followed, endeavouring to stifle their laughter. She looked in vain for her jacket. What could have become of it? She was sure she had left it hanging up.

"Can't you find your jacket, Ellen? Why, what have you done with it? Let me help you look for it," said Emily, who seemed unusually obliging. "Cook, she's lost her jacket; do you know anything about it?"

"Know where her jacket is! How should I know?"

"Come, a bright thought's struck me," said Emily. "Ellen shall have on that cloak that was to be given to Mrs. Stevens."

The cook burst out laughing, but said that was just the thing. So Emily ran down for a large old-fashioned cloak, and appeared with it on.

"Thank you, Emily," said Ellen laughing, "but I think that is more becoming to you than to me. If it is possible to find my jacket, I will. Are you playing me a trick? Do you know anything about it?" she said, beginning to suspect her.

"Well, I know that it was hanging up when last I saw it," said Emily.

"What's your jacket like?" said cook.

"It's a plain black cloth one."

"Is this it?" and the cook pulled out an old one of her own.

"No; but do tell me if you know anything about it. I shan't be in time; and I shall be so sorry not to go."

"Oh, never mind! stay with us for once. We're very good company, you'll find."

"Well, I'll put on my waterproof, and give up looking for the jacket now," said poor Ellen, quite dispirited.

"No; put on this cloak, it will suit you so well," said Emily, endeavouring to wrap her in it; but Ellen was firm and would not have it. She put on her waterproof.

"Now for my bonnet! Why! it's been taken out of the box! Come, Emily, it's really too bad. Tell me what you've done with it."

But Emily only laughed, and danced round Ellen, who was now disposed to be very angry, but yet felt the importance of keeping her temper, knowing that she would lose her influence by giving way, besides being very desirous not to yield to what she knew would be displeasing to her heavenly Master. So she quietly put on her hat; seeing which, Emily said, "Shall I show you where your bonnet is? I thought I'd put it where it would look to the best advantage;" and, going to the door, she pointed to the bonnet adorning the learned doctor's face, the cook coming out from the neighbouring room to enjoy the joke. Ellen looked distressed and annoyed.

"How could you do so, Emily?" she exclaimed.

"My new bonnet! to put it in that dusty place! It's very naughty of you! I don't mind a harmless joke, but when it comes to spoiling clothes,

and making me late for class, it's too much to put up with."

"Oh! she's getting furious!" cried Emily.

"Come, I should have thought, of all days, you wouldn't wish to be out of temper on a Sunday," said cook. "Why, her face is as red as a beet-root!"

"I do not wish to be out of temper any day," said Ellen, calmly, "particularly on a Sunday, and just as I'm going to class; and really I think you ought to know better than to spend your time on a Sunday in playing tricks. Well, Emily, you put my bonnet there, and you must get it down."

"Catch me!" said Emily.

Putting her gloves and necktie in her pocket, Ellen looked on the little chest of drawers for her Bible. It, too, had disappeared. She said nothing, but hastened downstairs. Before she left the house Emily said, "Here, take your Bible," as she handed her one.

At another time Ellen would have knelt down for a short prayer before starting for the class, but that day it seemed impossible, much as she desired it. She did, however, lift up her heart to God now and then, as she hurried along, in some such petition as this: "Heavenly Father! teach us by the Holy Spirit at our class, for Jesus Christ's sake."

On entering the room at Miss Marston's, Ellen found that the singing and prayer were over, and that the verses from which the lesson was taken were just going to be read.

"I'm very sorry to be so late, ma'am," she exclaimed in a subdued voice, and with a face red and tingling with her hasty walk and nervous confusion.

"Never mind," said Miss Marston. "I am sure something has happened to hinder you, for I have not known you late before," and she took the opportunity to give a hint about punctuality, asking those who were sometimes unnecessarily behindhand to be kind enough to make a point of coming early, so as not to interrupt the lesson and take off the attention of all.

Ellen's turn came to read, but she had just discovered that the Bible Emily had given her was in a foreign language; as it was bound similarly to her own, she had not suspected the trick. Already out of breath with hurrying, she now felt so flustered, that when the girl next to her let her read the verse out of her Bible, poor Ellen's breath seemed quite to fail her, and she could scarcely go through with it. However, she succeeded better afterwards, and enjoyed the lesson very much.

Mrs. Linton, from her bedroom window, had caught sight of Ellen on her way to the class, not

dressed as usual on a Sunday, and later in starting ; but she might never have known what had happened had it not been for one of the young gentlemen. Looking for a book to read, followed by his friend, he came to the book-shelf over which was the bust.

"Holloa!" was the exclamation ; "a nice place for a bonnet ! and most becoming to my grandfather ! I should look twice before I hung up my best hat on that peg, Charlie."

"Rather !" said Charlie, laughing : "with all due respect to your grandfather, it's a jolly dusty place !"

Edgar looked in at the drawing-room, where were his sisters, saying, "Girls, I think you might take better care of your bonnets. Come with me, I've something to show you. Somebody, it seems, is setting up for millinery."

"What do you mean, you absurd boy ?"

"Well, there's nothing too absurd to be true !"

"Just come and take a peep," suggested Charlie. They followed Edgar upstairs to the back of the house where the bonnet was crowning the stone head.

"Who could have put it there ?" they asked. "Poor grandpapa !" "What a place for a bonnet ! It is Ellen's, I believe ;" and they laughed heartily. Mrs. Linton was taken to see it. She remembered how Ellen had gone off not in her usual Sunday dress, and, returning to the drawing-room, rang the

bell. Emily came, and was questioned by her mistress as to why Ellen had gone to the class in her hat and waterproof.

"I don't know, ma'am," was the reply.

"Where were you when she left the house?"

"In the kitchen."

"Did you see Ellen when she was dressed to go out?"

"No, ma'am."

"Stay here."

Emily looked frightened.

Mrs. Linton called to the cook to come to her in the dining-room, and repeated the questions she had put to Emily.

"Please, ma'am, I think I heard her say she couldn't find her jacket."

"Why did she not put on her bonnet?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Where were you when she left the house?"

"In my bedroom."

"And where was Emily?"

"She was with Ellen in her room till she left it."

"Did Emily leave the room then?"

"Yes; she ran after her with her Bible."

"Whose bonnet is that on the head of my dear father's bust?"

"It's Ellen's bonnet."

"How did it come there?"

"It's not my putting, ma'am. I know nothing about it," cook replied in an off-hand manner.

Emily was then called in, and asked if she had placed Ellen's bonnet on the bust. Whilst she hesitated to answer, Ellen was heard returning, and was asked why she had gone out dressed as she was, when she explained that she could neither find jacket nor bonnet.

"Had you no idea what had become of your bonnet when you left the house?"

"Yes, ma'am; but only just before I left."

"Had any one removed it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Where?"

"It had been put on the stone head at the top of the book-shelves near the attic stairs."

"By whom?"

"Emily told me she had done it."

Emily looked most uncomfortable when Mrs. Linton turned to her and said, "This is quite different to what you told me."

Ellen was then asked if the cook knew who put the bonnet where it was, and on hearing that she did know, her mistress was shocked and distressed that two of her servants should have been so untruthful. Their separate accounts had not agreed, and Mrs. Linton had no reason for doubting the truthfulness of Ellen, who was asked whether Emily

was with her when she was getting ready to go out, and whether she saw her start for the class.

"Yes, ma'am ; she was with me when I put on my things, and when I was just about to leave the house she ran after me with this Bible."

"Let me look at it. Why, this is a German Bible of Miss Edith's !" exclaimed Mrs. Linton with astonishment. "It was very impertinent of you to take it, Emily, besides the awkwardness to Ellen. Now the one who has hidden her Bible and jacket must fetch them immediately. Emily, I wish you to reach the bonnet down at once, and bring it to me. Stay here, Ellen, till they return."

The cook was sulky, and unwilling to show that she had any share in hiding the things, but she could not get off. So presently she and Emily came back, bringing the Bible, jacket, and bonnet, which was not the worse, with the exception of the strings. Mrs. Linton insisted upon Emily giving Ellen eighteenpence for new ones.

The whole affair would have been passed over more lightly as a girlish joke, had not Mrs. Linton been aware of the unkind feeling which lay at the bottom of the conduct of her cook and housemaid, and had it not been for the falsehoods which they had spoken.

In vain the girls pleaded that they had done it in fun, and meant no harm.

"Fun to you, I daresay," said their mistress, "but no fun to Ellen! A joke should amuse all concerned in it, and annoy none. Besides, I do not think it was only for the sake of amusement. I have reason to believe that you two have cherished a jealous feeling against Ellen ever since she came. How would you have liked it if she had treated you as you have treated her, by hiding your bonnets and jackets in dusty places when you particularly wanted to wear them, thus making you late in going home or elsewhere?" Turning to the cook, Mrs. Linton said, "Emily is young and thoughtless, but you are six years older, and ought to have known better than to join with her in this childish folly on Sunday." Their mistress then spoke to them solemnly on the sin of falsehood, and urged them to seek pardon for this and all their sins through Christ, and to commit themselves to His keeping for the time to come, adding, that unless they were more truthful in future they could not continue in her service.

As they were leaving the room Mrs. Linton stopped Ellen, and said, "I am sorry cook and Emily have behaved badly to you. I hope they will think it over, and act differently after this, for I fear you have had much to bear from them, partly from thoughtlessness, no doubt. You will take the eighteenpence for the spoilt strings."

"If you please, ma'am, I'd rather not."

"Yes, Ellen; I wish it."

"Oh, very well, ma'am, since it's your wish; but I'd much sooner not."

"I hope you enjoyed being at your Bible-class, notwithstanding the little annoyances you had met with? You were a brave girl to push through all difficulties to go to it!"

"I enjoyed it very much, ma'am, thank you. I did feel rather confused at first, what with being late, and then the Bible in the foreign tongue! but I soon felt all right again."

"Were you enabled to keep your temper this afternoon, before you went to the class?"

"I wished to do so, ma'am. I don't think I was much put out, though they did say I looked angry."

"Well, it was very annoying."

The other servants were quiet enough after this, and avoided Ellen as much as possible. After a time Emily brought the eighteenpence and laid it down by Ellen.

"Thank you, Emily," she said; "as I told Mrs. Linton, I'd rather not take it, but she said she wished me to accept it, so I suppose I must."

Emily said nothing, but looked surprised.

A few weeks after this she went home for a holiday, and found one of her sisters suffering from

a sore throat. As it had become rapidly worse, the mother feared it might be scarlet fever, and sent Emily back to her place the next morning. But she had already taken the infection, and a few days after that dangerous disease too surely showed itself in her as well as in her sisters.

The cook dared not go near her, but Ellen became her nurse, and was both kind and skilful. After many inquiries, it seemed that no one could be found to wait upon the sick girl with this infectious complaint; and as Ellen was not afraid, and had hitherto been nursing her, the doctor decided that, according to her own wish, she had better continue to do so. It was her belief that she had had scarlet fever as a little child.

Emily's throat and head were very bad, and she was often delirious, especially at night. The cook had gone to sleep in another part of the house, and Ellen had taken her little bed into Emily's room, the good-natured doctor helping to remove the iron bedstead. After a time he gave orders that, unless there should shortly be a decided change for the better in the invalid, some one must take Ellen's place; for many nights she had very little rest, and she was growing paler and more worn-looking day by day. He would not allow any one else to come near Emily, not even Mrs. Linton.

When sensible, Ellen would say a few soothing

words, and try to cheer Emily, occasionally reading a text of Scripture to her, and kneeling near her every night and morning to pray aloud, in hopes that the invalid might catch the meaning of some petition, and unite with her in prayer. Often, very often, Ellen's heart was lifted up to God in earnest pleading for the sufferer.

After bathing the feverish hands and face, or some other little attention, Emily would murmur, "Thank you; it's too good of you!"

Although the doctor insisted that Ellen must have rest, the difficulty of finding any one to supply her place remained the same. Further inquiries were made, but in vain. At last it occurred to her that perhaps Aunt Betsey would change with her for a time. A letter was accordingly written to this effect, and an arrangement made for Elizabeth Hunter to come till Emily should be well enough to be taken home.

Ellen did not leave till she had placed her charge in her aunt's hands. Then, having thoroughly washed, even her hair, and changed all her clothes, she started homewards.

Before doing so, she had a farewell talk with Emily, who, though very weak, was now slowly gaining ground.

"My aunt will soon be here now," said Ellen; "I hope you will find her kind, and that she'll

take good care of you, and that you'll get on well together. She's good-natured and cheerful, or else I shouldn't have named her to mistress."

"Oh yes, Ellen. I hope we shall get on all right; but I shall miss you dreadfully. I feel rather nervous about your aunt. She won't be like you."

"I've heard say she makes a very good nurse, Emily. I shall want to hear about you not a little, I can tell you."

"Thank you so very, very much, dear Ellen, for all your kindness in nursing me. I know I haven't deserved it; but you'll try and forget the past, won't you?" asked Emily, with heightened colour and tearful eyes.

"Say no more about that, dear. I've been truly glad to be able to nurse you."

"I only wish I could repay you for all you've done for me!" said Emily.

"Oh, I don't want anything in return!"

"I used to think you were cowardly," the sick girl continued, "because you took things so quietly, and did not answer sharp—like when cook and I did things to annoy you. But now I've learnt that you're very brave. Do you think I'd have dared to go near anybody with scarlet fever, whether I'd had it before or not? But you have scarcely left me, and nobody to help you! You are good, and no

mistake; for none but a really good girl could do as you've done, taking all into account."

"Pray stop, Emily, or I shall be finely set up, and you knocked up," said Ellen, laughing. "I should have been very wrong if I had not been willing to attend upon you," she added.

"I mean to be quite different when I get well again," said Emily. "I shall not forget what you've read and said to me now and again, nor your prayers neither, Ellen. It hurts me to think how wicked and unkind I've felt to you."

"Oh, I thought we'd done with that subject! Don't trouble yourself about it any more. We shall be good friends for the future," was the reply.

"I must say this," continued Emily. "I never shall forget the way you behaved that Sunday when we played you the trick. You did take it so quietly. I should have been in a towering passion if you'd treated me like that. I was jealous of you, because Mrs. Linton seemed to favour you so much. But there! I'd behave different now, if I had the time over again. And then—you'd rather not have taken the money for the bonnet-strings! it surprised and puzzled me ever so; but now I see it's your religion that makes you better than other people."

"Have you thought about our Saviour since you've been ill, Emily?"

"Yes; and I feel I'm a great sinner. I should like to be able to call Him *my* Saviour," she added, after a pause. "When I was so bad I was dreadfully afraid I was going to die, and I knew I was not ready."

Ellen spoke to her very earnestly about putting herself into the hands of the Lord Jesus to be saved by Him.

"I shall remember what you've said, dear," Emily replied; "but how white and worn you look! I hope you're not going to have the fever!"

"I'm only tired and needing fresh air. You really must not talk any more. So good-bye, dear. I shall think often and very much of you; and you know I shall pray for you." Ellen had dropped her voice for the last sentence, and continued with solemn earnestness, "You will not only *think* about what I have said just now, about giving yourself up to the Saviour, but you'll *do* it. Don't delay."

She took Emily's hand and kissed her forehead, and would then have left; but Emily held her hand in a long grasp, whilst gathering tears prevented her speaking.

"So you are going home to-day," said the doctor, who came in at that moment. "I don't know what we should have done without you, I'm sure. You have been a brave girl, and your friend owes everything under God to your careful nursing."

"Do you think her going on well, sir, this morning?"

"She looks a trifle feverish again. I suppose she doesn't like the thought of parting with you."

"No, sir; and I'm afraid we've talked a little too much."

"That's a pity! I will give her something to soothe her."

Ellen heard her name called, and came down into the work-room (a little room where she had had her meals of late, at the foot of the servants' staircase). There she saw her aunt, who had just arrived. After having a few words with her, they went upstairs. The doctor gave his directions and left. When Ellen had made her aunt acquainted with all that seemed necessary, they took leave of each other; and with another kiss on Emily's outstretched hand, and whispering, "Don't delay," Ellen left the sickroom to prepare for going home.

A lingering, loving look had passed between the two girls, and they might well gaze long at each other; for, though they knew it not, it was their last opportunity of being together in this world!

How glad her friends were to welcome Ellen under their roof again! and she neither took the fever herself nor conveyed it to them.

In three weeks' time Emily was considered sufficiently recovered to be taken home, and Aunt Betsey left ; but before returning to her brother's, she spent a week with some old friends who were not afraid to have her. During the remainder of her absence Ellen was allowed to stay with her mother, who was still an invalid. How much she and the little ones enjoyed the company of their Nellie ! and the pleasure of being amongst them all was no less great to her. The fresh country air soon brought back the colour into her cheeks. She was rejoiced to find that her mother had begun to take pleasure in reading the Bible, and that she would listen with interest to what she remembered to tell her of portions of sermons or Bible-class lessons.

Ellen often wondered when Emily would be able to return to her work, longing to see her, and feeling sure that they would be great friends for the time to come.

Mrs. Linton had asked to hear about her, but one week after another passed and still no news came, except a few lines which had been written by a neighbour to tell of Emily's safe arrival at home shortly afterwards. At last a letter came from her mother on black-edged paper.

Fearing that the poor woman had lost one of her little ones through the fever, Mrs. Linton opened it and read as follows :—

"DEAR MADAM, — I write in great affliction. You will be distressed to hear that my poor Emily is no more. She must, I fear, have caught a chill, which ended in dropsy last Friday. She was very patient. We buried her yesterday. She wished her fellow-servant who nursed her to have the half-sovereign I now send, with her love. It is all that remained of her wages. Emmie often spoke of her, and said how good she had been to her.

"Thanking you, dear Madam, for all your kindness to my poor dear child, and all others who have helped her — I remain, with humble duty, your obedient servant,

"EMILY MARTIN."

It was a great shock to Mrs. Linton and her family to hear the sad news; but no one in the house felt it so deeply as did Ellen. If she could only hear that Emily had learnt to trust in Jesus before she died! Ellen would have given anything to be assured of this! How thankful she was now to have been allowed to nurse her, and for having spoken to her as she had done! Had her poor companion put off giving herself into the Saviour's hands? or had she taken the warning not to delay? Ellen never knew.

She got on very well with the new housemaid, but was troubled by the ways of the cook. From various little things which Ellen had observed, there

was reason to suspect her of being dishonest; but unless anything could be proved, it would not do to charge her with such a crime. However, one day Ellen felt she could not have been mistaken. She had observed that there was a large quantity of food of various kinds collected in one corner of the pantry dresser. Happening to go into the kitchen in the dusk, unnoticed by the cook, whose face was in another direction, Ellen saw her through the open door, filling a large basket for a girl in the back kitchen to take away. "Look sharp," said the cook, "you may come back again on Monday," as she gave the basket into the girl's hands.

"Who is all that for?" Ellen inquired.

The woman started and exclaimed, "Oh, how you made me jump! I never saw you come in. What business is it of yours to inquire who those odds and ends are for? If I choose to dispose of broken victuals what is that to you? I have a right to do so. Every cook has her perquisites."

"No, you have not; at least you ought not to take them, for you know our mistress does not allow of them."

I need not repeat the remainder of their conversation, which was unpleasant enough on the side of the cook, except to say that Ellen warned her that if the sort of thing she had just seen

should be carried on again, she would feel it her duty to tell Mrs. Linton about it.

The sly young woman managed to keep up her mean, dishonest tricks without their being discovered for some time after this, although she roused unpleasant surmises in Ellen's mind every now and then.

At last an occasion came which decided the latter that it was her plain duty to inform her mistress about the cook. One of the young ladies had lost a new and expensive pair of walking-boots. Ellen felt sure she had seen the cook wearing them; still it might be a mistake. It was possible that she had bought a pair like Miss Edith's. Ellen determined she would do what she could to find out the truth.

The following Sunday, after the cook had returned from morning service, something occurred which made her leave her bedroom in haste, and hurry downstairs. This time she had forgotten to hide the boots, which she had just taken off. Ellen went into her room and examined them. The maker's name was in them. Having obtained leave to go out on the Monday afternoon, she went to the bootmaker's, and inquired if he had sold a pair of boots to Jemima Wright. The man asserted positively that none in that house had given him their custom but Miss Edith Linton.

On returning, she asked to speak to Mrs. Linton alone.

"Very well," said her mistress, "we will go into the dining-room. Now what have you to tell me?"

"Something, ma'am, very unpleasant, which I could not say if I did not feel it my duty to do so."

This was true, for Ellen could bear much with regard to herself without complaining, but when it came to be a question of dishonesty towards her mistress and the family, she felt that it was quite a different case, and that then she had no right to be silent, for that would be to consent to her mistress being wronged. Ellen determined to be faithful to her, and would not connive at what was dishonourable; knowing also that it would be far better for the cook that such proceedings as hers should be put a stop to as soon as possible. So, however painful it might be, she would do her duty as in the sight of God, and was resolved not to screen and encourage wickedness in a fellow-servant; and therefore she told her mistress as much as had come to light of the cook's conduct.

Mrs. Linton was surprised and grieved at what she had heard, but exclaimed, "I am glad you have told me about it, Ellen; for I know you would not say what you did not believe to be true. The

matter shall be thoroughly sifted. I am obliged to you for telling me; for, though you have rightly felt it your duty to speak out, it is but few, very few, who would have been honourable enough to do as you have done."

The butcher's book was sent for, when Mrs. Linton was amazed to see various items set down which she knew had not been ordered by her. The grocer's and the greengrocer's books were also called in, and the result was equally unsatisfactory.

The cook was summoned upstairs, and the subject talked over with her. As might be supposed, she denied having ordered anything more than her mistress had told her.

Mrs. Linton spoke to her most seriously about her dishonesty and untruthfulness, and of the danger to her immortal soul, and begged her to confess her guilt both to her mistress and to God, and to seek His forgiveness. But the girl remained sullen, and obstinately refused to say a word.

What was Mrs. Linton to do? She shrank from dismissing her at once, fearing that if the woman lost her character entirely, it would be her ruin. Yet her mistress could not keep a thief. Retiring into her own room, she sought for guidance in the difficulty. Then it occurred to her about the boots, and she felt that the cook's boxes ought to be searched. Perhaps if nothing except what belonged to her should be

found in them, the girl might be kept for another month, provided she would confess to what she had done and were to appear penitent.

So Mrs. Linton gave orders for her to come upstairs. "Now you must bring your keys. As you have proved so dishonest about other things, I feel it my duty to search your boxes."

The woman became very angry and insolent; then she pretended she could not find her keys, but Mrs. Linton was firm, and insisted upon it. Miss Edith, who was present, soon recognised her boots, and many things lost by one or other member of the family were now brought to light.

"I am extremely sorry to see all this," said Mrs. Linton; "but though you have behaved so shamefully to me and my daughters, I am more shocked to think of the state of your own soul. You will leave us to-morrow morning. I must write to your parents to tell them my reason for dismissing you, and shall request one of them to be here by ten o'clock, to take you away. I would willingly have kept you another month for the sake of your character, had you appeared penitent; but as this is not the case, and I find you have stolen so much from us, I cannot possibly allow you to remain longer."

"I don't want to stay, I'm sure," the girl answered sullenly.

Ellen was sent for to help to pack her boxes in

the presence of their mistress. The next morning, to the deep sorrow of her respectable and aged parents, and to the shame of her family, Jemima Wright was sent away for theft.

Perhaps it may not be altogether out of place to make a digression here, and leave Ellen Hunter for a little while, to give the history of her fellow-servant.

Jemima Wright had not always been dishonest. Whatever her natural tendency might be, there was a time when her character was no more called in question than that of many other merry country girls with whom she was associated in the village, at school, and in play-hours. The habit of taking what did not belong to her had grown upon her from the age of fifteen, when she went into service as kitchen-maid. Idling about one day, and seeing the door of her mistress's bedroom open, Jemima peeped in. No one was there, so she amused herself with looking round, especially at the pretty things on the dressing-table. A bottle of scent attracted her attention. Jemima smelt it, then thought, "There will be no harm in my taking a drop. It will never be missed, and who's to know about it?" Suiting her action to her word, she put a little on her pocket-handkerchief. How sweet it was! Instantly it struck her that the servants would smell it, and ask her how she had come by

it. The handkerchief was therefore hidden in a drawer.

However, one day coming downstairs with her things on ready to go into the town, the temptation of entering the bedroom again and taking a little more scent was irresistible. This time it was a larger quantity that was poured out. A fellow-servant met her, and exclaimed, "Why, Jem! you are sweet! Where did you get your scent from?"

"Oh, it's only some I've had given me," and it passed without further notice.

The apparently trifling act of dishonesty had already led to falsehood; its consequences were increasingly evil and bitter as wormwood; though at first it was *by little steps at long distances*, which steps gradually became larger and more frequent.

The untruth Jemima had told made her feel uncomfortable at first; but next time it was more easy to tell another, and she was less uncomfortable afterwards.

From helping herself to the scent she went on to take little things of small value to anybody, but which did not belong to her. Then something larger presented itself to her covetous mind, and, though feeling rather shocked at first at the idea of taking it, she quieted her guilty conscience with the thought that her wages were small; that other girls of the same age had more money; so she

would consider the tempting article part-payment, as her due, knowing in her heart that such conduct would not bear the light of day. What a successful snare had Satan laid! Poor foolish girl! she was not easy, and it was not long before she was found out, when she was dismissed from her place at once, having tried in vain to deny the charge.

Her poor parents were much distressed, but their daughter was young. They talked seriously to her. She seemed penitent, and gave promise of amendment, and was kept at home for a time to help her mother whilst a younger sister was sent to service.

After two years a situation offered. The lady was willing to take Jemima as kitchen-maid on trial for a month. She went to the place, did very well, and continued there a year, leaving with a pretty fair character, to "better herself," as she called it. No one had discovered her in any particular act of dishonesty, nor in any very marked falsehood; though she might have been more truthful, and was suspected of taking little things in many instances. There was something not open, not straightforward, about her. Her mistress felt she was not one in whom full confidence could be placed, though there was nothing to bring forward as a charge against her. It was therefore a relief to all the household when the girl was gone.

Soon afterwards she met with a situation as cook

in a small family. She cooked well, and at first gave satisfaction ; but, sad to say ! the old habit soon began to gain ground again.

One day her master had been hastily called away from his office, where he was writing ; having locked his desk, he had left his keys near it. Jemima, in passing, saw, through the glass door, the keys lying on the table. She knew that money was kept in the desk. A very pretty dress in a shop window had caught her eye. It was just what she wanted ; the price—five-and-twenty shillings. Her wages would soon be due. If she were to take a sovereign it could soon be replaced, she thought, by pretending to find it in some corner on the floor : and no one was anywhere near. Had she allowed herself a few minutes to listen to the voice of her conscience, and to guess what the fearful consequences might be, surely she would not have attempted to carry out so insane and reckless a plan !

Contrary to what she supposed, her steps were soon followed by her mistress, who happened to open the door and enter the room, the housemaid after her. The wicked young woman was detected in the very act of locking the desk. Mrs. Jackson grasped her closed left hand, and out dropped the sovereign.

“Jemima, I never thought you could have been

so bad as this!" was her horrified exclamation.

"Hannah, you have seen it all!"

"Yes, ma'am; I couldn't have believed it."

"Call Lane, and come back again."

Lane, the gardener, was despatched to fetch his master.

In her fright Jemima would have rushed out at the door, but was not allowed to escape.

"What's the matter, Lane?" said his master.

"Do you know why your mistress wants me?"

"No, sir; I only received a message to ask you to come, if possible, and as quick as you could."

So Mr. Jackson, thinking it very inconvenient, put on his hat, and hurried homewards.

On hearing the front door open, Hannah met her master and asked him to come into the office. He looked for an explanation as he entered, which Mrs. Jackson at once proceeded to give.

"This is a very serious affair," he said. "I doubt whether it is the first offence of the kind. The girl's boxes and drawers must be searched, and should anything else be found, I shall give her into custody."

Many missing articles were discovered, and the consequence was Jemima was committed to prison, to await her trial at the assizes in the neighbouring county town, when she was adjudged guilty, and sentenced to some months' imprisonment.

Before being taken from her master's house the parents were sent for, and great was their grief and disappointment. They had hoped that their daughter was doing better, and that she had profited by her former disgrace; but her heart was unchanged, and when the old temptation, so strong to her, came with renewed force, she had no power to resist.

Her father fetched her home when her time at gaol was up. Her manner was much more subdued at first, but before long she seemed to have lost the sense of disgrace, which all her family felt so bitterly.

The mother took in washing, and Jemima had to help her; but often, when it was possible to get free, the girl would idle away the time, so valuable to her mother, with the village lads, who knew of her imprisonment and had no respect for her. Her mother besought her with tears to remain quietly at home and seek to regain her character.

Poor parents! Though most respectable, the "one thing needful" was lacking to both. Her father threatened to turn Jemima out of the house when he heard of her unsteady ways. Her mother wisely consulted the clergyman and his wife as to the best course to take. They advised that her daughter should leave home as soon as a situation

where she would be looked after could be found ; but then, what about her character ? Who would engage a girl who had been in gaol ? Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd promised to do what they could for Jemima. Perhaps her former character would be some help. Both of them had much serious conversation with her more than once. She seemed roused to a desire for better things, and sincerely to purpose turning over a new leaf.

At last, after many inquiries, they heard of a friend wanting a cook. It was in a large establishment, where a housekeeper was kept. Mr. and Mrs. Holroyd went to see their friend, and tried to persuade her to give Jemima a trial. Mrs. Gifford was much opposed to the idea, but on hearing all the circumstances, was at length won over by her kind and Christian feelings, and consented to take the girl. Mrs. Miller, the housekeeper, was made acquainted with her history, and charged to keep a strict eye upon her ; but no other servant was to know anything about it.

Jemima conducted herself well for a long time. Mrs. Miller was interested in her, and did all she could to help her to do right. Her mistress too often spoke to her young cook, with a view to encourage her in well-doing, and to warn her against temptation.

The improvement in Jemima, however, was not

lasting. She began to feel so well settled in her situation that she grew careless, and the old habits of untruthfulness and dishonesty gradually returned. Mrs. Miller complained of her to her mistress, who spoke to Jemima very faithfully, and warned her that she must leave unless there was an immediate and decided change for the better. The girl was more careful after this to be honest and truthful, but it was not of long continuance. At length, despite of warnings, she grew so heedless and insolent, that she could no longer be allowed to remain in her comfortable place.

Several others were tried. Fearing suspicion, she herself gave notice to leave two of them. Then she became cook at Mrs. Linton's.

Her poor parents were almost heart-broken when Jemima left that situation for dishonesty. They said little to her; but the tears of her mother and the sorrowful sighing of her father were far more expressive than reproaches; and I believe she was not altogether untouched by her parents' grief.

She married, and I have heard no more of her.

To return to Ellen. Her mistress felt indebted to her for her faithfulness, and raised her wages in consequence. She had liked Ellen from the first, but on finding how forbearing she was with her fellow-servants, she rose in the esteem of her mistress, who valued her still more on account of her un-

wearying kindness and careful nursing of the poor young housemaid, for the doctor was loud in praise of Ellen. Now again, by her conscientious behaviour in exposing the dishonesty of the cook, she had risen still higher in Mrs. Linton's estimation.

Time went on, and a change came over Ellen, which was only too evident.

The sweet simplicity and freshness, the self-forgetfulness and humility, of her girlish days seemed to have withered. The fragrance which had given such a charm to the flower was gone! The bloom which had made the fruit so attractive was rubbed off! In the place of the lovely unconsciousness of self came a sense of importance, an affectation of manner, which pained those who felt the deepest interest in her. She always dressed quietly, and in good taste, but it was plain that she considered the subject more than formerly, and spent more time and thought on her appearance than was necessary. In one word, she was *spoilt*.

Miss Marston knowing of Mrs. Linton's partiality for Ellen, which was constantly shown in many little ways, and fearing that she might be lifted up by it, gave her occasionally a word of warning; but as far as one could see, her gentle hints were not taken.

Ellen had stood well in times of adversity, and even in years of comparative shade, but the sun of

prosperity had scorched her. She had not been on her guard against it. It is very few indeed who can bear to be made much of for any length of time. Mrs. Linton, knowing that Ellen was one in whom she might place confidence, had made the mistake of consulting the young servant as a friend, and frequently conferring upon her indulgences and marks of favour, thus doing her the injury of throwing her out of her right position. It was a sad pity! Ellen was happy in being so trusted and beloved by her mistress and the family, but her peace of mind was lessened, for she was cherishing pride and selfish feeling, which soon began to show in her manner and conduct, and led her to act inconsistently as a Christian.

She left Carrington with her mistress, to accompany her abroad. On their return, Miss Marston saw Ellen by arrangement, and drew her into conversation about old times and Bible-class companions, when she brightened up, and seemed more like her former self.

"May I hope to see you more regular in coming to my Sunday class than you were before you left Carrington?" Miss Marston asked. "There was a time when you never missed attending it, if you could possibly help. It is a great privilege to study the Word of God together. Do not let trifles keep you away."

"I will try to come more regularly, ma'am," was the reply.

"There is one thing I want particularly to say to you, Ellen. I know your mistress has reason to value you as a good and faithful servant; but take a word of advice, and do not let her favour and the prosperous circumstances in which you are placed come between you and your Saviour. It is some years now since you openly professed yourself His servant. I can so well call to mind that confirmation-day! Remember, He has bought you with His blood. You are His own. Seek above all things to please and honour Him."

"Yes, ma'am; I'm glad to have been reminded of it," and, though tears stood in her eyes, Ellen smiled with the sweet, child-like smile of earlier days.

Years rolled by. Ellen married, and went to live at a place ten miles from Carrington. Wedded life, together with care and trouble, has proved a blessing to her. She has learnt to forget herself for the sake of others; and though it has sometimes been a hard lesson, which has cost her many prayers and tears, yet she has reaped in consequence "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

Her husband and she are fellow-helpers on the road to heaven. They once lost a dear little boy of two years old, which was a great grief to them, and

has always left a gap in the mother's heart, though other children came to fill the home.

Ellen and her husband have at times, I fear, been sadly pinched for money, scarcely knowing how to "make both ends meet." He was unavoidably thrown out of work for a time. Then the doctor's bill and the funeral of the child were great expenses, and Edwin and Ellen Free were not the people to beg. They put their trust in God, and hoped for better times, determining, if possible, to pay their way and keep out of debt. Things are more prosperous with them now, and they hope soon to lay by a little money against a rainy day.

One bright summer morning, not long ago, Ellen might be seen walking through winding lanes with her eldest child, a girl of fifteen. Both were neatly dressed as if for Sunday. Jessie was slight and looked delicate. She was almost as tall as her mother. There were many little groups, of young people especially, all of whom seemed to be travelling in the same direction. The sweet sound of distant church-bells mingled with the notes of joyous birds. Ellen looked rather tearful, but not unhappy.

"It is such a comfort to me," she said, addressing her daughter, "that you are not going to the service thoughtlessly; and that you have had good instruction beforehand."

"Yes, mother, I never thought so much about these things before."

"I well remember my confirmation-day. It was just such a day as this, Jessie. I did not go to it carelessly either. I have always had reason to be thankful for the kind interest taken in me, not only by the clergyman, but also by the lady whose Bible-class I attended. Confirmation was a time of much blessing to me, and I hope, with all my heart, it will be so to you, dear. We need not fear, not even our own weak and foolish hearts, so long as we trust in the Lord entirely. What a comfort prayer has been to me, Jessie!"

"You will pray for me, mother?"

"My dear, I have prayed for you all your life; do you think I could fail to do so now? May the Lord keep you close to Him all your days, and make you a better woman than your mother! for there was a time when I wandered away from Him."

"Mother, I should like to be half as good as you!" said the bright young girl, with fond and justly-deserved admiration.

The mother replied, "What would any of us be without the Lord!"

SUSAN JONES.

SUSAN earnestly hoped and trusted that the holy desires and purposes of her heart, fanned into a flame at confirmation, would not grow cold. Miss Marston had said, "Take care lest you rest satisfied with good wishes and intentions—with religious impressions—without carrying them into effect by making them practical in your life." So Susan heartily prayed that she might not fall into this deadening snare, and that God would work in her, not only "to *will*," but also "to *do*, of His good pleasure." As long as she trusted herself to His keeping, all was well.

There were times when she felt she could not bear with the nurse's temper any longer, but must leave Mrs. M'Donald's. Many young women would have left long before; but Susan was a girl of good common-sense, and therefore one who would not lightly throw up such a situation as hers.

"It was God who brought me here," she said to herself, "how can I leave before He points out the way? It would be foolish as well as wrong. In another place I might not be able to go both to

church and class, and have such a good mistress as I have here. Well, I suppose there's generally some drawback wherever you go. Then those dear children! I couldn't bear to part from them, unless I was obliged to do it. No; I must stay where I am, that's clear."

After Susan had been three years in her place the poor nurse's health broke down completely, and she could no longer remain in her situation. During the last few months of her stay there she had become more subdued. When the attacks of headache and irritability came on, there was evidently a restraint laid upon her temper. She would be much quieter at such times, and when tempted to say an angry word would stop herself and let the matter pass. Mrs. M'Donald was truly sorry for the trials of the poor woman, who had for many years proved a faithful servant; and Mrs. Sampson felt the parting with her master and mistress and the children very much. The day before, Susan had taken the younger ones to choose presents for their nurse, and had added to the gifts a little book.

When alone with her for a few minutes, nurse seized the opportunity to have some conversation, and remarked, with considerable effort no doubt, "Susan, I want to say a word to you before I leave. I've often been very cross with you, and said things I ought not to have said, which I knew

were not true. Pardon an old woman, my dear, and forget the past."

"Oh, nurse!" faltered Susan, "please say no more about it. I know how much you've suffered with your head. Forgive me for all short answers and angry words I've given you back."

"Susan, you've been very forbearing, and I have something more to say about this. For a long time I thought it was suitable for such a lady as Mrs. M'Donald to be religious. It seemed to be easier-like for her and master to be so than for such as we. The mistress has often spoken to me about good things, and she has lent me books now and again. I used to think what she said was very pretty, and sometimes conscience has told me I have not been all I ought to have been; but when you've so quietly taken my angry words, I've seen that there must be a power which enables you to act as a Christian, and keeps you from giving way to a temper which is natural to you. Then, too, you've always shown that you wished to serve the Lord and please Him, and I couldn't but notice how much happier you've been than myself. So Susan, 'better late than never.' I've come to the Lord, and asked Him to take a poor old sinner like me, and make me His. Now I'm easy in my mind, and feel more cheerful."

"I am so rejoiced to hear it, nurse," whispered Susan.

"All's new to me," continued Mrs. Sampson, "and I've much to learn, having begun so late in life; but I believe the Lord can do all things; and as He died for me, He'll give me the faith I need, and the power to serve Him. I feel, Susan, I owe much to you, my dear; and I want you to accept a little present as my acknowledgment of this. You've been saving up your money lately to help poor Widow Sykes, so I fancy a new dress may not be unacceptable; though I won't say but what you're always neat and nice."

Susan could hardly speak for tears. To hear of the good influence she had exercised over nurse was even more touching than her humility in asking the forgiveness of one so much younger. Mrs. Sampson proceeded to take a brown paper parcel out of a drawer, and gave it to Susan.

"Oh, nurse, how very good of you! how can I thank you enough? I shall set great store by it, and it is so pretty."

"Well, my dear, I'm truly glad you like it. Give me a kiss, and say no more about it."

There had never been so much expression of affection between the two nurses before. Both felt very happy.

"I chose a very quiet dress," said Mrs. Sampson,

“because I knew you’d like that best. I will say this for you, which is much to your credit. I’ve never seen you bedizen yourself with flowers and feathers in your bonnet or hat, nor wearing earrings like most silly young girls do now, trying to ape their mistresses, or to appear genteel and attractive. It’s my way of thinking, that if they aren’t good-looking, the fine things don’t sit well upon them; and if they are, why, they don’t want them.”

I need scarcely say how glad Susan was that she had remained in her situation. God had graciously set the seal of His approval on her consistent conduct, by making her the means of bringing the nurse to the feet of Jesus in penitence and faith.

Mrs. M'Donald would willingly have engaged another girl to help Susan, and have kept her on as head-nurse, young though she was for that position, but she could not stay long after Mrs. Sampson had left. Annie Jones was about to be married, and Susan would be wanted at home to keep house for her father.

There were many and great regrets when she left; and the parting was very trying to her, especially with her mistress and the children. It was sad to say “good-bye” to Miss Marston and Susan’s friends in the Bible-class, and to think

that she should no longer have the opportunity of attending it; but then a warm welcome awaited her at "home, sweet home," and it was a delightful thought to be with those so dear to her again.

She sought to fulfil her duties there as faithfully as those in her place of service. Temptations, however, met her in her father's house as elsewhere; for where can we be free from them? In some form or other they are sure to visit us. At the time of which I am about to speak, her trial was not whether she would give place to Satan by yielding to angry feelings when provoked by the bad temper of an upper servant, but she was tested whether she would be swayed by the spirit of the world.

Her parents had never encouraged their children to laugh about marriage and treat it as a joke, nor to think that the great end and object of life was to be married. Girls will sometimes make acquaintance with any young men who are willing to accompany them as walking companions, but this was not the way of the Jones family: the parents would not have allowed, neither would their daughters have desired it. Of course they saw their brothers' friends sometimes, and they were more or less friendly with them; but these lads or young men and their parents were known to Stephen Jones.

The young man I must now name had been a playmate of Susan and Edward Jones when they were all children together. He had been absent from Lanford for some years, and returned to the village soon after Susan came to stay at home. They met, and were attracted to each other. Charles Day contrived to see much of his former companion. It was plain to her that his heart was in the world, and that he was indifferent to the things which she had been led to care most about. Yet she neither avoided the attention he paid her, nor let him know how differently she thought on religion. Once, indeed, Susan spoke out with some decision, which had the effect of quieting her conscience for a little while. By degrees she yielded to the influence of the friend who was drawing her away from Christ; yet it was not without some feeble efforts to testify for Him, each one growing weaker than the last. It became evident that the world she had so solemnly renounced at confirmation was gaining a hold on her.

Charles Day was pleasing in manner and appearance; but more than this, he was a steady, upright young man, or Susan would not have been so attracted to him. She tried against her better judgment to feel satisfied with his religious state, and would say to herself, "He is so regular in attending church, and he will sometimes go with me on a

Wednesday evening ; I never heard him say a bad word ; he must be good"—thus endeavouring to stifle the conviction that Charles had no real love for the Saviour, nor desire to know Him.

Susan was ensnared. A coldness with regard to religion gradually came over her. It became apparent to herself and others that she was different to what she had been on leaving Carrington ; and that she had in a great measure lost her interest in spiritual things. It was sadly true that self-gratification, vanity, and earthly love were filling the heart where Christ had been enthroned. Susan was not really happy or at ease ; how could she be so ? It was true she had given Charles Day no promise, but she knew quite well what his intentions were, and supposed it would not be long before an engagement was entered into between them ; for Susan had determined to accept him, heedless of the whispers of conscience, knowing also that her father would not approve of her choice, but hoping to win him round.

Much as she loved Charles Day, a secret feeling would force itself upon her, that they could never hold communion on better things, because he did not understand about them. She endeavoured to hide from herself the truth that God's glory and her happiness both here and hereafter would depend very much upon the partner she would take for

life, and she tried in vain to shake off the remembrance that God's command to Christian women was to marry "only in the Lord."

The time had been short, but matters had gone to greater lengths than Susan's father was at all aware. He had given no encouragement to Charles to come to the house on finding that he was seeking to win Susan's affections, and yet unsuited to be her companion for life. Stephen Jones had expressed his own views on the subject, and his hope that his daughter would not encourage Day.

Annie and her husband came to visit her old home. They saw more of what was going on, and entreated Susan to avoid the company of one who, they tried to convince her, was not qualified to make her really happy. But though half persuaded, she angrily refused to listen. Her father determined to take the first opportunity of speaking to the young man, in order to draw from him what his intentions were, and to express disapproval of them. This would be the following morning.

In the meantime Charles had said to himself, "I must have a few words with Jones, I suppose, as I'm pretty sure I've won my prize. Of course he'll only be too glad, though he does seem rather crusty sometimes. Well, it isn't many fellows that are so lucky!" He was, however, too presuming. That very evening something happened to vex him. He

became angry with Susan, and even rude to her. She was astonished and greatly pained. Charles had never behaved to her in such a manner before. All her gentle reasoning with him was in vain, and he left her, slamming the door after him. The poor girl hurried up to her own room, locked the door, and gave way to a flood of tears. The whole truth stood out clearly now. The veil had been lifted from her eyes that evening. Susan saw how foolish and wrong she had been—how self-willed—how inconsistent with her Christian profession. To think that she had been on the point of becoming engaged to be married to a man whose heart was in the world, which she had solemnly promised in the sight of God and His people to renounce!

She had cherished the thought that such a good-living young man could not be far wrong, and deluded herself with the foolish idea that if he was not so decided in the matter of religion as could have been wished, she might yet be the means of bringing him round to think and feel with her. "He has been brought up so differently to me," she had said, "it is natural he should not be so strict;" but he had already weakened Susan's hold on Christ, and what had she done to help him heavenward? Afraid of saying too much, it came to her saying nothing at all. Then her thought had been, "It is not so much what I *say*

as what I *do* that will influence Charlie." Thus had she yielded to the "fear of man, which bringeth a snare." Failing to confess Christ with her lips, she had failed to confess Him in her conduct too. Susan now saw that her fondness for Charles had been an idolatrous affection, a love apart from Christ, lessening her love to Him. At first she had really desired to talk with her friend on the most important subjects, but the wish, not being satisfied, had grown faint. The great mistake was in not humbly asking and submitting to the guidance of the Lord when she first perceived that Charles Day was paying her particular attention.

Now Susan earnestly sought for wisdom and strength to do God's will. Rising from her knees, she felt strengthened and comforted, and resolved to have no further intercourse with Charles. He would probably write or call to apologise for his conduct. Her father agreed with her that it would be better to wait till then before taking any further step; in the meantime she had better prayerfully consider what was best to be done.

In the evening of the following day came a letter from Charles, expressing his great sorrow at having behaved so unkindly, begging Susan to think no more of it, and hoping they should be as happy as ever. He had been "worried

past endurance," he said, before they met, and had the tiff, or he should not have been "such a bear."

But though the poor girl readily forgave him, and in one way felt more drawn to him than before, was also truly sorry to cause him so much pain, and perhaps to appear unforgiving, yet she saw it was the right thing to decline keeping company with Charles, and therefore the wisest and best for both parties.

She wrote accordingly the next day, having taken time for prayer and reflection. The letter cost her many tears. Happily there was no engagement to break off, although there had been a tacit understanding between the lovers.

Again Charles wrote, greatly distressed, begging Susan to allow him to see her once more, if only for a few moments.

She felt it wiser to refuse, painful though it was to do so, not daring to see him lest she should yield to his earnest entreaties; so steeling herself against her feelings, she declined to meet him. He became indignant, and for some days took no further trouble about her; but his affection returning, he determined not to give up all hope without one more effort. He would take a bold step and call when he knew she was likely to be at home and probably alone. He counted on his

return to favour, if he could but have a personal interview.

So early one afternoon he started with this intention, dressed in his best, knowing Jones would be busy in the bake-house. Glancing cautiously into the shop to make sure that nobody was there, he went boldly through, and tapped at the door of the little parlour where Susan was as usual sitting at her work. Without waiting for an answer, he opened the door. The poor girl had often tried to avoid him when she thought he might be coming, but now, when he really did appear, there was no escape.

He soon began to plead that she was the only one who could lead him aright; he feared he should "go to the bad" without her, as he should not care a rap what became of him if she gave him up. I cannot tell all that passed between them, but Susan was enabled to keep her ground, though she confessed she must have given way, if she had not been specially strengthened from above. The young man would have left her in indignation, but she was enabled in some degree to calm him down, and they parted as friends.

Soon after this he left Lanford, and never more attempted to regain Susan's affections.

Her father, seeing she needed a change, arranged for her to stay a week or two with some relations

at a distance. It was her first visit to them; and the country was quite new to her, and very pretty. The change of air and scene did her good, and especially the effort she felt compelled to make, to throw herself into the interests of those around her.

It was some time before Susan quite recovered her spirits; but the sorrow she passed through was not without its sanctifying effects. The spiritual deadness had passed away, and she found real comfort and happiness in Christ and heavenly things, whilst seeking the teaching of the Holy Spirit in reading her Bible, which now became a greater treasure to her than ever; and thus she grew in grace and in the knowledge of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. She became more and more thankful to have broken off with Charles Day.

On her return home, Susan was asked to take a class at the Sunday school, and was very pleased to become a teacher there. She took a great interest in her little girls, and rejoiced to have some work to do for the Lord. It drew away her mind from sad thoughts, and occupied her in a way that was good for her. She visited the children in their homes, making herself acquainted with their friends; gradually, also, she learnt of some sick and afflicted people, who were very glad to have her to read to them as opportunity offered.

Time went on, and other young men appeared

desirous of paying Susan special attention, but as she felt she could not respond to it, she would give them no encouragement.

After a while, a new family came into the parish, of the name of Taylor. The father and one of his sons were stone-masons; the other son, Alfred, worked for a time with the Lanford carpenter, and then set up for himself at Wattingford.

They became friendly with Jones and his family. Alfred and his sister Mary took classes in the Sunday school where Susan also was a teacher.

It was soon evident that the brother entertained more than ordinary friendship for her.

She could not help respecting him, but the regard he showed her made her nervous and shy, and anxious to commit herself to the Lord's keeping, that He might order all as He saw best. She met Alfred Taylor at his father's, and could not but admire his consistent conduct, and observe what a good son and brother he made, always kind and considerate. Susan felt sure that he could not fail to make a good husband. She knew also that his character stood high in Lanford as an upright and Christian young man.

"But," she thought, "if he really cares for me he will seek me out;" and, though she did not avoid meeting him, she did not seek opportunities for herself.

Her father and his parents were equally desirous that an engagement should take place between them, and did what they could to further it.

Alfred and Susan knew enough of each other before they became engaged to feel assured that they were one in heart and mind, having the same faith in One blessed Saviour whom both loved, the same interests and purposes in life, the same hope of eternal glory. They could speak together of the things of God, and help each other forward on their Christian course.

They were engaged about a year, during which time Susan endeavoured in every way to prepare herself to make her future husband a happy home.

The wedding-day came. There was sunshine everywhere that morning in June ; on the dewdrops, which had been thickly sprinkled on hedges and wayside grass, sparkling like diamonds with borrowed tints of emerald, orange, and red ; sunshine on the thatched roofs of cottages, from the chimneys of which the blue smoke rose ; sunshine on the casement windows, early opened to let in the pure summer air, fragrant with roses and honeysuckle, wall-flowers and lavender ; and sunshine on the geraniums and other plants which stood in pots on the windowsills, inhaling the sweet breath of the morning, and unfolding in the golden light. The bees had been buzzing about for hours, gaily intent, as usual, on

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getting through their day's work. Butterflies were passing lightly through the air, and other insects were dancing in the warmth and brightness, seeming greatly to enjoy themselves. The weathercock on the tower of Lanford Church glittered in the sun ; and sunshine was in the hearts of at least *two* young people on their way to that church that lovely summer morning.

Susan had risen early to have more time than usual to be alone with God, conscious how much she needed her heavenly Father's blessing on the untrodden path before her. She knew that, bright and happy as the prospect was, it must bring new responsibilities and cares. Under a deep feeling of need, and earnestly desiring to fulfil her duties as unto the Lord, she implored His grace and guidance. Words learnt when a child, and to which she had given her sincere assent when she surrendered herself to the Lord at her confirmation, rang in her memory that wedding-morning:—"That I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life." "What a good thing we haven't to get to heaven by *our* obedience!" she said to herself. "Still the path of obedience is the path of blessing. 'To do the will of Jesus, this is rest,' as the hymn says. I wish I'd shown my love to Him since my confirmation by seeking to do His will more humbly and heartily.

How sweet and strengthening those promises of God which I have just read! He has helped me all along, and is He not guiding me to-day? How much I have to thank Him for!" She brightly and trustfully looked forward to the future.

"Our times are in Thy hand,
Father, we wish them there,"

was the utterance of her heart, for Susan knew that he whom she loved best on earth could join with her in saying it.

She was very simply and quietly dressed on her wedding-day, not even then forgetting that she had renounced the foolish display and vanity of the world. As she walked by her father's side to church, Susan was greeted with many a "God bless you!" from neighbour or friend, for she was well known in her birthplace, and a great favourite. Her simple, unobtrusive deeds of love and kindness to the sick and afflicted, her Christian conduct, pleasant words and winning smile, were not forgotten on her wedding-day.

It was a pretty and cheerful bridal party; though, during the service, Susan's father sighed occasionally, or brushed away a tear. Was he thinking of his own wedding-day, and of her from whom death had parted him for a while? or was it

that he felt the separation from his much-loved daughter?

At the conclusion of the service, the bells rang a merry peal; and bright and affectionate were the greetings which awaited Susan and Alfred at her father's house.

She had received some nice and useful presents, besides others now added to them. Among which was a handsome Bible from Miss Marston, a tea-service from Mrs. M'Donald, and other gifts from the young ladies, who occasionally saw her, and always remembered her with affection.

Jemmy Spriggs, the shop-boy, had taken great pains to decorate with evergreens and flowers the parlour where the party were to dine. He had been up early in the morning to make, with the help of Carrie Jones, a motto to hang over the mantel-piece. An old box-lid was covered with ivy-leaves, and card letters forming the words, "May you be happy," with lilies - of - the - valley on moss. The whole was surrounded with large white lilies in honour of the bride, whose name, "Susan," signifies *lily*.

But not to go too much into particulars, I will only mention that after the dinner, which was made pleasant by cheerful little speeches, and one or two bright songs, ending with a characteristic

"I've been led to see things in a very different light to what I did then, Susie," said Eliza. "I've often felt sorry for the way in which I went to confirmation, for I was trusting to myself."

"Yes; I know you'd go in quite another spirit if you had the time over again," was Susan's reply.

Alfred had come in, and he joined in with what they were saying.

"It seems to me," he said, "there are a great number of young women and lads who go to be confirmed, and haven't an idea of the solemnity of it. Some, no doubt, are ignorant; others altogether careless. Those who have afterwards become decidedly religious have many of them to regret the way in which they went to that service."

"You were not altogether careless about it, Eliza," said Susan.

"No; but I was self-righteous. Poor Rose! how giddy she was! I was told long since she had learnt to think differently about religion!"

"Don't you agree with me," said Alfred, "that that prayer at confirmation is very good which begins, 'Defend, O Lord, this Thy servant with Thy heavenly grace'? We do want the Lord Himself to defend us against the temptations which surround us on all sides."

"Yes," said Susan, "He Himself is our Defender and Saviour. We don't wish to have His grace without *Him*."

"That we may 'continue Thine for ever,' that's nice!" suggested Eliza.

"Yes; the Keeper of the sheep, our Good Shepherd, says that His sheep shall never perish, and that none shall pluck them out of His hand," replied Alfred.

"What have you to say about the last part of the prayer, Alf?" asked Susan.

"Well, now, mother, suppose this time *you* tell us what you think."

"Then, to my thinking, it's a great deal to pray for; that every day we should be more and more under the power of the Holy Spirit! but surely He is ready to do the work in us, if we will only let Him!"

"Yes," said Eliza, "that's where it is; we like the things which hinder the good work too well to try to get rid of them."

"What a cheering text that is that says, He 'is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think'!"

"Yes, Alf," said Susan, "and the last thought of the prayer is so sweet, 'until we come unto Thy everlasting kingdom;' it is such a blessed end to look forward to, and *it* has no end!"

That night, at family prayers, Alfred added the words, to which each heart responded,

“DEFEND, O LORD, *us* THY SERVANTS WITH THY HEAVENLY GRACE, THAT *we* MAY CONTINUE THINE FOR EVER; AND DAILY INCREASE IN THY HOLY SPIRIT MORE AND MORE, UNTIL WE COME UNTO THY EVER-LASTING KINGDOM.”

THE END.

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